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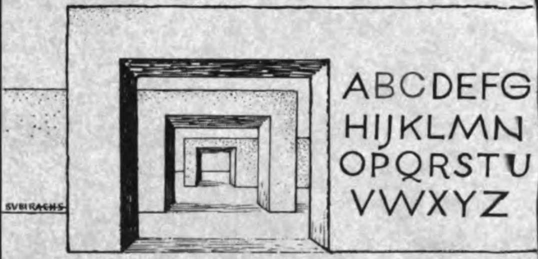
Pasquale Villari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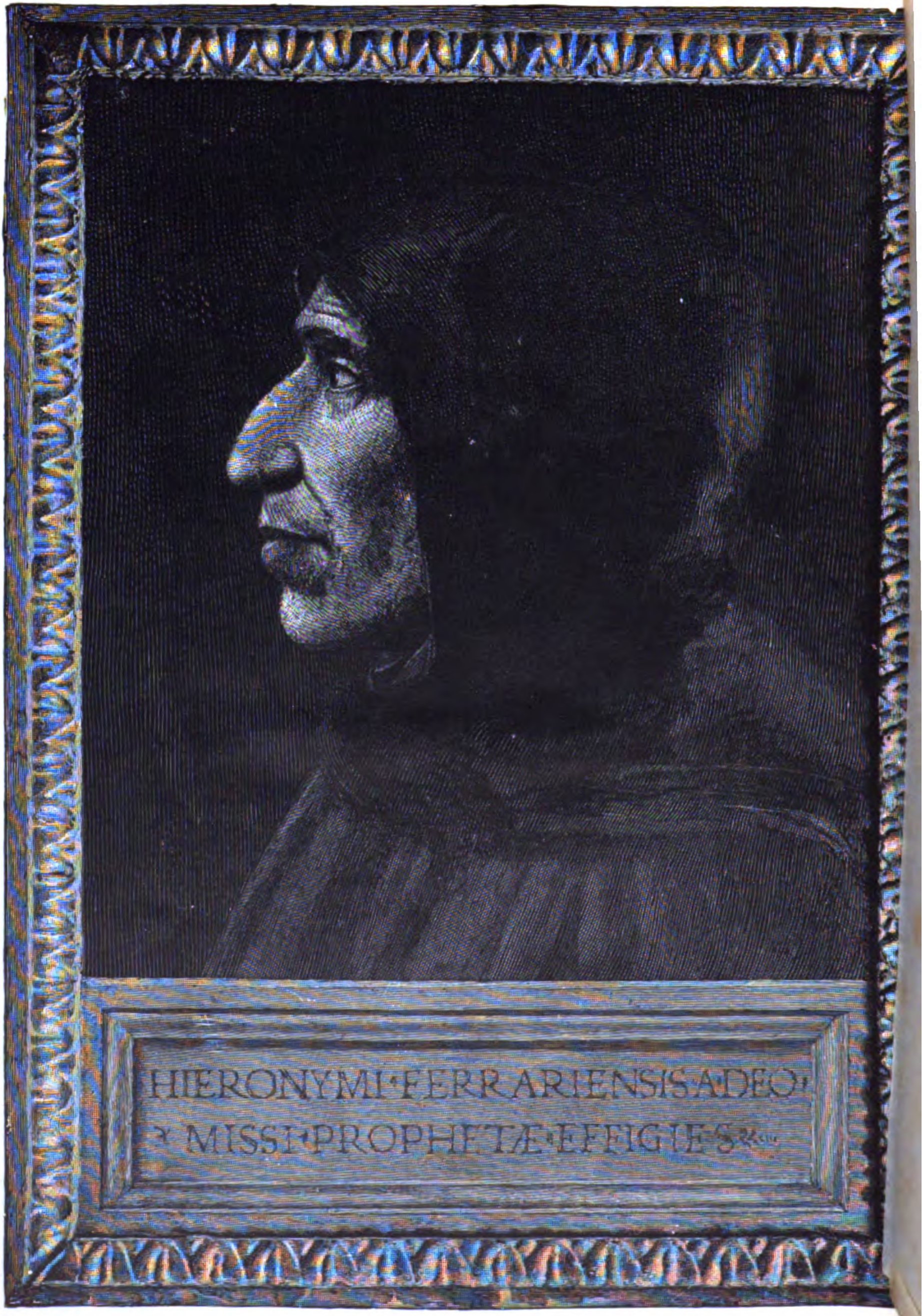
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SAVONAROLA.

(From a Painting by Frà Bartolommeo.)

Life and Times

OF

Girolamo Savonarola

BY

PROFESSOR PASQUALE VILLARI

TRANSLATED BY

LINDA VILLARI

WITH

PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

SECOND POPULAR EDITION

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SECOND POPULAR EDITION

London
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To the
RIGHT HON. WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE,
CHAMPION OF ITALIAN FREEDOM,
MASTER OF ITALIAN LEARNING,
AUTHOR AND TRANSLATOR
Dedicate this Book
IN TOKEN OF FRIENDSHIP AND RESPECT.

Florence, 1888.

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TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD.

WHILE translating this "Life of Frà Girolamo Savonarola" as faithfully as possible, the author has sanctioned occasional liberties with the text and arrangement of sentences, in order to meet the requirements of English historical prose. Other slight variations have been introduced as the fruit of fresh researches undertaken by the author; while the publication of new documents in the second edition of Signor Gherardi's "Nuovi Documenti e Studi intorno a G. Savonarola" (Florence, 1888) has enabled me to give some additional notes. Several notes unlikely to interest the general reader have been abridged under the author's direction. The documents given in Appendix to the original work are purposely excluded, since all students capable of reading old Italian must, necessarily, be too well versed in modern Tuscan to consult the book in its English dress.

The well-known translation by the late Mr. Leonard Horner of the first edition of "Savonarola and his Times" has been long out of print, and the present edition being so greatly altered and enlarged as to form almost a new work, an entirely fresh version was found to be required.

LINDA VILLARI.

FLORENCE, *September*, 1888.

PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION.

MANY reprints of this work have appeared since its first publication more than twenty-five years ago. During this period much fresh light has been thrown on the history of the Italian Renaissance, and many of my own ideas concerning it have been changed. Were I now studying Savonarola's life for the first time, my work would be undoubtedly different in kind, although my views as to the Friar's character and historic value have remained substantially unchanged. But I have no intention of offering the reader a new book; I merely reproduce an old one, and while adding necessary corrections and supplements have preserved its original form and physiognomy.

During this long interval I have naturally detected errors which demanded revision. Also, many fresh documents have been discovered and made known to the world. The late Count Carlo Capponi, a devoted and reverent admirer of Savonarola's memory, continued to publish the results of his protracted research. The Archivio Storico Italiano, and other societies in Florence, Ferrara, Modena, and elsewhere, have likewise brought out many new documents. It is needless to enumerate them here, as they are all quoted in the notes, and my valued pupil, Professor A. Cosci, has given a most minute and accurate account of them.[1] I will only mention two publications of very special importance, namely: "The Despatches of the Modenese Ambassador in Florence," comprising new letters of Savonarola and his friend Duke Ercole I., collected at Modena by Signor A. Cappelli in 1869,[2] and furnished with a learned introduction; and the noteworthy collection of "Nuovi Documenti," published in 1876, at the request of Father Ceslao Bayonne, of the Dominican Friars, by Cavaliere A. Gherardi of the Florence Archives. In both these works the value of the documents is enhanced by their editors' critical skill and unerring judgment.[3] And, although, as Professor Cosci has justly remarked, these new documents make no essential change in our previous conception of Savonarola's life and character, they furnish fresh details requiring consideration, and modify others which were hitherto imperfectly understood.

---

[1] "Archivio Storico Italiano," series iv. vol. iv. 1879.

[2] "Frà Girolamo Savonarola e notizie intorno il suo tempo," by A. Cappelli, Modena, 1869. This work is extracted from vol. iv. of the "Atti e Memorie della R. Deputazione di Storia Patria per le provincie Modenesi e Parmensi."

[3] "Nuovi Documenti e Studi intorno a Girolamo Savonarola." Florence: Carnesecchi, 1876.

Meanwhile I too had collected a considerable stock of fresh documents and of Savonarola's inedited writings. I had caused an exact copy to be made of his marginal notes in the Bible in the Florence National Library, and on the sheets he had added to it, and these were found to comprise several unpublished tractates and sermons. A precious autograph codex, now in the Museum of St. Mark in Florence, supplied me with several summaries of other unknown discourses, throwing much light on Savonarola's first years in Florence, during the reign of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Numerous unpublished ambassadorial despatches add to our knowledge of the iniquitous plots organized against him in various quarters. In a similar way much was gleaned from other unpublished documents and compositions of Savonarola which will be quoted in due course.

But during this quarter of a century few works have appeared on Savonarola of any real historic merit. The most celebrated of these has been a novel, George Eliot's "Romola"; but although admirable as a work of art, it has contributed no new facts to history, since, as was only natural, its illustrious author accepted established conclusions without dispute.

A biography of Savonarola, by Mr. W. R. Clarke, published some years ago, is, as the author allows, a mere compilation.[1] Father Bayonne, on the contrary, undertook a new biography, based on long preliminary studies. He collected, translated, and edited three volumes of Savonarola's religious works.[1] But, with the fixed idea of writing the life of a saint and prophet, he accorded so much time and attention to the miracles and prophecies, that his "Studio su G. Savonarola" is of scanty historic value. He even failed to extract any real profit from the "Nuovi Documenti,"[2] and died without writing the complete biography on which his thoughts had so long been engaged.

---

[1] Rev. William R. Clarke, "Savonarola and his Life and Times." London: S.P.C.K., 1878.

The biographical essay, published in 1877, by the illustrious Professor Ranke of Berlin, calls for a very different verdict. The writer's keenly critical spirit was swift to grasp and define the historic, moral and religious importance of Savonarola. His terse, clear and rapid narrative is based on previous works, published documents, and some of the old chronicles, and cannot be said to comprise any element of novelty, save that naturally imparted to it by the noble intellect of its writer. It is an historical essay, rather than a biography, for not one of Savonarola's works is passed in review.[3] Yet, after the fashion of all great men, Professor Ranke contrived, even within these brief limits, to moot a new point, and one of high importance to any biographer of Savonarola. Having treated the question in detail elsewhere,[1] it is only requisite to briefly allude to it here.

---

[1] "Oeuvres Spirituelles Choisies de Jèrôme Savonarola, Collationnées et Traduites," par le Rev. P. Emmanuel. Ceslao Bayonne du même ordre. 3 vols. Paris: Librarie Poussièlgue Frères, 1879.

[2] "Etude sur Jèrôme Savonarola d'après de nouveaux documents," par le Rev. P. Emmanuel. Ceslao Bayonne, Paris: Librarie Poussièlgue Frères, 1879.

[3] L. von Ranke, "Savonarola und die Florentinische Republik gegen Ende des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts," in the volume of "Historisch-Biografische Studien," pp. 181–357. Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1877.

Long ago, it was suggested by an Italian writer that the two ancient biographies attributed to Burlamacchi and Pico were both forgeries. No one echoed the doubt at the time, but Professor Ranke has given it serious attention. In his opinion the biography undoubtedly written by Giovan Francesco Pico was composed in 1530, the date of the preface, and during the siege of Florence, of which mention is made in chapter xxiv. At that period, he remarks, the Piagnoni were again ascendant in Florence, had revived the memory of Savonarola, and certain heated imaginations had invented new legends about him. These Pico had collected, and accordingly his book, written so long after Savonarola's time, and in the midst of popular enthusiasm, can have no genuine historic value. On the other hand, the biography attributed to Burlamacchi cannot possibly have proceeded from his pen. Burlamacchi died in 1519, and his chronicle not only records posterior events, but makes two allusions to the year 1566.[2] Hence Professor Ranke holds it to be a compilation of Pico's work, which is not only quoted in it, but from which certain passages are literally translated. Thus the two chief sources of the life-history of Savonarola are reduced to one that has neither a critical nor historical basis The illustrious German accordingly relied almost exclusively upon printed documents and the old chronicles, giving great and, perhaps, undue importance to the unpublished records of Cerretani and Parenti, and turning to account certain fragments from those writers which he had copied in his youth. But although this course was allowable in an historical essay, it would have been highly detrimental to a work on a larger scale. How could he have written a Life without referring to the works of previous biographers? Nor would the well-known chronicles of Cerretani and Parenti have sufficed to fill the gap. Their numerous details concerning Savonarola are merely scattered through a vaster narrative, and are not altogether impartial. Neither are they more valuable, historically, than many of our printed chronicles. We made frequent reference to them in the first edition of this work; but, treating of times when political passions were fierce, and party spirit ran high, we could only arrive at the truth by constantly collating them with other authorities. In any case, exclusive reliance on the chroniclers and printed documents would deprive us of numerous particulars and anecdotes, serving to give colour and vitality to the person and character of Savonarola, his kindred, companions, and friends. A dry and unattractive string of facts would be all that we could achieve. Consequently the question raised by Professor Ranke was of capital importance to every biographer of the Friar.

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[1] "Rivista Storica Italiana," Fasc. i. Turin : Fratelli Bocca, 1884.

[2] *Vide* pp. 165 and 209 in the Lucca edition of 1764.

We hold that had Ranke written his work in Florence, with the numerous MSS. of the period before his eyes, he would have arrived at a very different conclusion concerning the two biographers, and would have been less prompt to reject them. Pico states in his proem that having been Savonarola's friend for six years, it was immediately after the Friar's martyrdom that he resolved to write his life; and Pico's letters prove that the task was certainly completed in 1520. He afterwards corrected, improved, and amplified it, and consequently delayed its publication to 1530, as he mentions in the proem, *ad hoc usque tempus distuli editionem.*[1]

The Italian biography conventionally attributed to Frà Pacifico Burlamacchi was certainly written by another, for although he died in 1519, posterior dates and events are recorded in the work. First published in 1761 in Baluzio's "Addizioni alla Miscellanea," it was transcribed from a codex incorrectly copied from another of older date. In fact many older and more trustworthy codices are to be found in the Florence libraries. Nearly all these are of the sixteenth century, and mostly anonymous, excepting where Burlamacchi's name has been added by a later hand. This name first appears, no one knows why, towards the close of that century.[1] Both the older codices, as well as the later, which are still more numerous, show many points of difference, and are essentially divergent as regards the prophecies and miracles, which were increased and modified by devout copyists, according to existing traditions in St. Mark's and other convents of the Order. But the biographical narrative remains substantially the same, with certain slight variations in form and arrangement.

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[1] *Vide* our before quoted essay in the "Rivista Storica Italiana."

All these different patchworks of the so-called Burlamacchi are derived, and more or less freely translated, from a Latin biography, in the collection of MSS. from suppressed convents, in the National Library of Florence.[2] The calligraphy of this MS. is of the first half of the sixteenth century; its numerous alterations and corrections make us believe it an autograph; while the frequent repetitions and a greater disorder than in other compilations serve to prove that this biography is the original source from which later writers derived or rather translated their materials. It is anonymous, but the author was certainly a brother of St. Mark's, a contemporary of Savonarola, and his faithful follower. This we know by his own words, and he also tells us that in 1524 he continued writing his book, and that he only narrates facts which he had witnessed himself, or learnt from other trustworthy eyewitnesses. He had made use of Placido Cinozzi's biographical epistle, Pico's biography, which he styles admirable, and other works. Of his great diligence we have a striking proof in the fact that he continually refers his readers to a volume now in the Riccardian Library (cod. 2053), written in the same hand, and which, together with the works of Cinozzi and Pico, contains a most precious series of authentic documents. This Latin Life, or Biography, as we will call it to distinguish it from the others, is therefore not only the real source of the so-called Burlamacchi, but the work of an eyewitness, founded on the writings of other contemporaries, and upon important documents collected by the author and copied in his own hand. Also, while praising and often referring to Pico's biography, he is by no means content to give an imitation, reproduction, or summary of it. His own is a work of greater extent, contains many more facts, and has an independent historical value. Indeed it is not improbable that Pico himself may have referred to this Latin Biography, for the corrections and additions he mentions in his proem. Certainly the manuscript copy of the first compilation of his work, in the Riccardi Codex, 2053, contains few of the facts posterior to 1520, which are comprised in the Latin Biography, and were added to its printed version of 1530.

---

[1] In the Casanatense Library in Rome we recently found a seventeenth century codex attributing this biography to P. Frà Vincenzo di Bernardo dell' Ordine de' Predicatori, who in the "Annali di San Marco" (a. c. 174) is mentioned as the Superior of the Convent in 1566. At c. 125 there is his signature dated 1569. A later hand than that of the copyist of the biography attributes it, as usual, to Burlamacchi, with the remark that it is already printed; another hand adds, "Revised by P. Maestro Frà Timoteo Bottonio," and this was also inscribed on the printed version.

[2] It is marked I. vii. 28. We referred to it in our first edition, and refer to it still more frequently in the present one.

All this plainly proves that the two old biographies cannot be reduced, as Professor Ranke thought, to one alone, since, in spite of the connection between them, each has an independent and indisputable historic value of its own. As to Burlamacchi, or the Latin Biography on which his work is founded, we can assure the reader that we have documentary proof of its historical accuracy. We shall therefore continue to quote from it under the conventional title (which in default of a better is even accepted by Professor Ranke), always, however, verifying it by the original Latin and by Pico, whose authority has been less often disputed.

Besides, it may be clearly seen from what we have said that even were Pico and Burlamacchi put aside, it would be quite possible to dispense with their aid. Nearly all the facts they narrate might be gleaned, not only from other documents, chronicles, and the works of Savonarola, but from the contemporary writings, chiefly in manuscript, of Frà Benedetto, Lorenzo Violi, Domenico, and Girolamo Benivieni, and Placido Cinozzi, whose "Epistola," frequently quoted by us, is perhaps the oldest source of the various biographies. It was impossible for Professor Ranke to know this in Berlin, where he could not consult the numerous codices contained in the Florentine libraries, and thus ascertain on how solid a basis the two ancient biographies are grounded.

It is natural that the doubts of the modern reader should be aroused by the strange prophecies and miracles so minutely described by Pico and Burlamacchi, in which we can have no belief. But at that time every follower of Savonarola spoke of and believed in these things, and chroniclers as well as biographers deemed them deserving of record. It would be a mistake, however, to accept this as a reason for doubting all that contemporary writers relate of the Friar of St. Mark's. We have not to deal here with the myths and legends of a primitive and uncultured society incapable of analysis, criticism, or historical accuracy. On the contrary, these Savonarola-legends were the natural outcome of an age often lapsing into the ultra-credulity consequent upon exaggerated scepticism. Without miracles there could be no belief in the supernatural; accordingly miracles were imagined. Thus, men who jeered at all things, denied all things, ended by having the blindest faith in the occult sciences, in prodigies, prophecies, and spirits of the air. And even such men as Guicciardini and Machiavelli shared the latter belief. This is one of the problems that the historian of Savonarola must specially keep in view and specially try to solve. By examining it we may learn not only the explanation of the catastrophe that led him to the scaffold, but the nascent germ of the malady still afflicting our countrymen, and by which they are incapacitated from giving due importance to religious questions whether in abstract studies or in the realities of life.

This conviction first stirred us, more than twenty-five years ago, to write Savonarola's life; this conviction gave us strength and patience to re-explore original sources, seek out fresh authorities, and revise and correct our first work with unwearying care. We now re-publish the book, holding the same opinions with which we originally began it, and confirmed in our previous judgment on the Friar of St. Mark's and his executioners. The protests of those who would reduce the Italian Renaissance to a mere revival of Paganism leave us totally unmoved. From their point of view Christianity would have then almost disappeared, whereas, on the contrary, it gained new force with Luther's Reformation and the counter-reformation of the Roman Church. In our opinion Savonarola's historic grandeur consists in his having dared to believe amid general doubt, in having upheld, against the scandals of the Borgia and the sceptical cynicism of the philosophers, the forgotten and derided rights of Christianity, liberty, and reason. He devoted his energies to the moral renovation of mankind, when others thought solely of man's intellectual renovation; he held virtue to be the assured basis of religion, and the source of true liberty, when all seemed convinced that political and Christian virtue, patriotism, and religion were unavoidably and irreconcilably opposed. It was this that won him the admiration of the very scholars whose excesses he so sternly combated, for although apparently satisfied with Paganism, these men felt that it left a painful void in their souls. For the same reason he was admired by many cold and keen-witted politicians, who, while recognizing the fact that there was no room for conscience as States were then guided, admitted that this fact bewildered their judgment, and seriously disturbed their minds. Thus, in attacking philosophers and statesmen, the Friar of St. Mark's seemed to reveal to both their most secret thoughts, and to restore their lost peace. Hence the great admiration and devotion felt for him by many.

Only those without any intimate knowledge of Savonarola can regard him as one who desired to revive the Middle Ages, and again sacrifice earth to heaven, the world to the Church. To all familiar with his life and writings, he appears, on the contrary, in his true light, as a soul yearning for the Christian ideal he proclaimed to his contemporaries; *i.e.*, that without virtue, self-sacrifice, and moral grandeur, both mankind and society must fall to ruin. Surrounded by scholars, philosophers, poets, and artists, who were among the most ardent of his followers, he was no enemy to the Italian Renaissance, but he saw and felt the inherent defects which were leading to its decay. With the eloquence and ardour of inspiration he proclaimed this from the pulpit, and was a true precursor and prophet of the future. To his faith in virtue—virtue sanctified by religion—and sanctifying freedom, he dedicated his whole life and died in its cause. Superstitions, blunders, hallucinations, and weaknesses notwithstanding, he therefore stands out from the Italian Renaissance, of which he is an essential part, in heroic proportions and irradiated with the halo of martyrdom. And so long as men have faith in virtue, so long will their admiration for him endure.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

DURING the lifetime of Frà Girolamo Savonarola all Europe rang with his fame, and for more than two centuries afterwards he engaged the attention of our greatest writers. But in the eighteenth century his name was either completely forgotten, or mentioned with quasi-contempt. Such was the common fate, in that age, of all religious men, all religious works. Bayle, in his dictionary, merely expressed the general opinion in making the poor Friar the butt of keen, biting sarcasm, and designating him as a base and ridiculous impostor who had well merited the martyrdom inflicted on him.

In 1782 an anonymous life of Savonarola appeared,[1] written in Italian, and falsely dated from Geneva. It was the work of a Florentine, one Modesto Rastrelli, an historian of some note in his day. He shared Bayle's ideas in the main, but repeated in wrathful earnest all that the former had said in jest. The venomous sneers of Bayle were penned with the coldness of a sceptic, those of Rastrelli with exaggerated fury and zeal. This too evident animus robbed the book of its merit, for otherwise it gave proof of careful research, and possessed a certain incorrect and lawless charm often to be noted in our last century writers.

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[1] "Vita del Padre Girolamo Savonarola." Geneva, 1781

A year after the publication of this work a new "Storia di P. G. Savonarola"[1] appeared at Leghorn, also without the author's name. It was written by the Dominican, Vincenzo Barsanti, who, in answer to the other anonymous biographer, warmly defended his brother in the faith. Barsanti stood alone, in that century, as an admirer of Savonarola's sermons; he had studied the old biographies, and the precious manuscripts, afterwards long believed to have perished, of Lorenzo Violi's "Giornate," and amassed much minute information on a subject that, however disregarded by his contemporaries, was very dear to his heart. Uninfluenced by the current of the age, he adopted the tone of more primitive times, and seemed destined to rank with the ancient biographers. For the spirit of the old chroniclers is revived in his work: it is stamped by the same devotion, the same errors, the same fanaticism, although devoid of the ingenuous originality which in their pages so vividly reproduces the colour of the times. Besides, Barsanti is so lavish of quotation, so minute in confuting all Rastrelli's assertions, that his book is difficult to read, and unlikely to tempt any one to closer knowledge of Savonarola. In fact, for fifty years after its appearance none followed up the theme, and the name of the Friar of St. Mark's seemed completely forgotten.

The nineteenth century inaugurated a very different order of ideas, and gave a new direction to historical studies. The Middle Ages, so despised in Voltaire's day, were again raised to honour; the examination of religious questions was no longer deemed beneath the notice of serious minds, and it was now possible to praise a monk without exciting universal scorn. Germany turned to these new researches with an almost feverish zeal, and that country has the honour of being the first to call the real attention of the literary world to the character and doctrines of Savonarola.

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[1] "Della Storia del Padre Girolamo Savonarola: libri quattro, dedicati e S. A. Pietro Leopoldo." Leghorn, 1782.

In 1835 Rudelbach brought out a biography[1] in which, without dwelling much on Savonarola's character, without giving new facts, or fresh explanations of those already known, he chiefly sought to analyze and determine the value of his hero's doctrines. He was certainly the first to deduce a system of theology from Savonarola's works, the first who had the courage to assure modern Europe that those works, upon which such violent abuse had been poured, deserved the attention of the learned, and were the product of a lofty, speculative intellect. He declared his views with the genuine enthusiasm of a discoverer of new truths, and his book met with great success in Germany. This perhaps was less owing to its intrinsic merit than to the author's purpose, inasmuch as he accepted Savonarola as a precursor of the Reformation. Luther himself had canonized the Friar as a Protestant martyr, but in the eighteenth century this verdict had been entirely forgotten. Now, however, it was again revived by the efforts of Rudelbach, supported and fortified by his thorough examination of all Savonarola's works. Hence the great applause accorded to his book in Germany and England, and the steadfast sympathy subsequently evinced by writers of those countries for the Friar of St. Mark's.

Nevertheless, on impartial review, many grave errors are to be detected in Rudelbach's work. As a life history of the man it tells us nothing new, and as an examination of his doctrines it is very imperfect. With much wrestling and labour the author stretches these doctrines on a Procrustean couch, changing and distorting them in such wise that we should often be tempted to doubt his good faith did we not know to what extent a man may be blinded by party spirit; and he leaves unmentioned such of the writings as are too plainly opposed to his ideas. An instance of this may be seen in his minute exposition of the "Triumph of the Cross." This work was actually reprinted by the press of the Propaganda Fide, and its first three books treat of those articles of the Christian faith on which Protestants and Catholics are almost agreed. These Rudelbach carefully expounds, for the sole purpose of discovering in them some hidden Protestant meaning. But on reaching the fourth book, where Savonarola speaks of the Sacraments in a manner that puts his Catholicism beyond doubt, his German biographer abandons all attempt at analysis and hastens to quit the subject. And he recurs to this method again and again.

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[1] "Hieronymus Savonarola und seine Zeit. Aus den quellen dargestellt," von A. G. Rudelbach. Hamburgh, 1835. The reader will find several of these quotations repeated in the notes, but it seemed indispensable to collect here all necessary information on the biographers.

The analysis of "Savonarola's prophetic character," as the author calls it, should have been by rights the best part of this biography. It was a new and important theme, for no one had really studied it before. Nevertheless, instead of carefully collecting all facts, and impartially determining their value, Rudelbach set to work to explain theories solely evolved from his own imagination. First of all he defines what we are to understand by *evangelical prophecy*, and then marshals before us in an unbroken line all the prophets of the Reformation, inclusive of the Abbot Joachim, St. Bridget, and Savonarola. Plainly this is neither history nor criticism, but a mere flight of fancy in search of support to a foregone conclusion.

In 1836 a second German biography appeared in Berlin,[1] from the pen of Karl Meier, who has chiefly studied the part of the subject most neglected by Rudelbach— namely, —the life and character of Girolamo Savonarola. By long and persevering researches in the libraries and archives of Florence and Venice he had gleaned a precious harvest of documents, and armed with these returned to Germany to write his book. Nearly every codex declared by later writers to have been unearthed by themselves, nearly all the documents afterwards published as *new*, had been already discovered by Meier, and either quoted or reproduced in his pages.[1] But, incredible as it may seem, the author was incapable of turning his materials to account. His work shows the strangest mixture of marvellous patience and industry with unpardonable negligence and inexactitude. He sometimes deplores the loss of certain documents, which are actually contained in the very codices discovered and frequently quoted by him. In collating the documents he has published we often meet with errors and gaps such as would be unpardonable in the most negligent of writers, and are inexplicable in one who, at other times, is really careful and scrupulous. Meier writes the biography of an illustrious man, and enriches it with many new and most interesting particulars; but, without ceaseless reference to the notes, the reader would never perceive that the book was the fruit of original research. Throughout the work Savonarola remains a lifeless puppet, or rather an empty abstraction; the new details of his life neither diminish nor add to the vague and confused conception of him afforded us by previous biographers. Meier's book is a clear and eloquent proof of the worthlessness of the most precious documents in the hands of one who is unable to deal with them.

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[1] "Girolamo Savonarola, aus grossen Theils handschriftlichen Quellen dargestellt," von Karl Meier. Berlin, 1836.

Almost the same verdict must be passed on the portion of the work devoted to Savonarola's doctrines. It is true that Meier tries to modify the exaggerated conclusions of Rudelbach, and fails to find in the writings so complete and absolute a system of Protestant theology; nevertheless he strives to include him, at all costs, among the martyrs of the Reformation. Nor are his arguments to this effect very different from those of Rudelbach. The latter had, at least, the excuse of being led astray by the force of his unbridled imagination, whereas Meier, who is all moderation, and picks his way with timid steps, is altogether inexcusable. What, too, can be said, when we find him pausing to remark that Savonarola hardly ever mentioned Purgatory, and that his enemies accused him of seldom alluding to the Virgin Mary? Meier would deduce from this that the Friar already shadowed forth the ideas of the Reformation, but apparently lacks courage to rely on such feeble arguments, since he is frequently obliged to record sermons full of almost superstitious utterances concerning the Virgin, and others in which the faithful are openly exhorted to pray for the dead.

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[1] Proofs of this will be adduced in the course of this book and in the Appendix to the Italian edition.

Another serious blunder is to be noted in Meier's work. While moving cautiously forward, and minutely explaining such of the Friar's doctrines as are merely copied from St. Thomas and the scholiasts, he fails to observe all that is special to Savonarola, and serving to prove the originality of his mind. He pauses now and then to dwell on passages which seem to him to contain germs of the Reformation, but appears so slenderly convinced by his own words that he naturally fails to convince his readers. And when he treats of the prophecies it is very difficult to ascertain his meaning. He is disposed to condemn Rudelbach's verdict, to demonstrate that, if Savonarola were no prophet, neither did he believe himself to be one, nor desire to be esteemed as such by others. But then again he shrinks from roundly pronouncing a judgment that is so manifestly contradicted by facts, and, as usual, halts half-way, in a state of puzzled uncertainty.

On comparing the two German biographies with each other, we are bound to conclude that Rudelbach's fantastic dissertation, in spite of its numerous errors, gives a truer idea of what may be called Savonarola's uncouth originality than that to be gained from the researches, documents, and pretended accuracy of Karl Meier's work. Rudelbach's mistakes were too lightly condoned, the merits of Meier too unjustly forgotten; but in either case the public verdict was really more just than it seemed at first sight.

These German works, and more especially the weight of Luther's authority, served to diffuse the notion that Savonarola was really a precursor of the Reformation; hence increased sympathy was aroused for him in England and Germany, and the attention of Europe directed, with a somewhat anxious curiosity, to the history of his life. It was then that an eloquent voice was heard from the Convent of St. Mark's, claiming Savonarola as the champion of Catholicism and liberty. Father Vincenzo Marchese, of the Preaching Order, was already known in Italy by his "Storia dei Pittori Domenicani." An elegant writer, a sincere Catholic, and an ardent lover of truth and liberty, his residence in St. Mark's had fired him with a passionate admiration for Savonarola. With a respect and reverence almost amounting to worship, he collected every memorial of the Friar to be found in the convent, ransacked the Florentine libraries and archives, and on several occasions produced the results of his studies in the pages of the "Archivio Storico Italiano" in the shape of unpublished letters of Savonarola or writings illustrative of his life. And although these documents were not always of much intrinsic worth, the care and acumen with which they were edited and brought to bear upon history gave them a certain importance. The author's name, and the nature of his subject, won them a kind reception, and at last Padre Marchese, encouraged by the public favour, published his "Storia del Convento di San Marco."[1] The principal and most noteworthy part of the work was almost a complete biography of Savonarola. The author represented him as a reformer of morals, politics, and religion; described his life and manners, and commented on his writings and discourses. By dwelling upon a part of the Friar's history that had been hitherto neglected, he made us understand the intensity of Savonarola's love of liberty, and how this had first led to his persecution, and then to his death. Admiration for this martyred brother of his Order wrought Padre Marchese to genuine eloquence, and endued his book with a vivid force and reality which are totally wanting in the German biographies. It met with deserved success, and the public mind in Italy was roused to an ardent and enthusiastic interest in the republican Friar who had so daringly defied the Borgia and the Medici, had sought to strengthen the old bond between liberty and religion by re-establishing both on their true basis, and who had suffered martyrdom for his country and his God.

But Padre Marchese's work, although admirably fitted to arouse public curiosity, could not entirely satisfy it. His researches were too partial and fragmentary to enable him to write a complete biography. Only acquainted with a portion of the Friar's works and sermons, he could contribute an eloquent chapter to the history of his convent, but no finished study of Savonarola. This, indeed, was forbidden by the nature of his work. Besides, he was too great an admirer of the hero, whom he venerated almost as a saint, to be his truly impartial historian. Consequently fresh studies and researches were needed for the task.

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[1] First published in the "San Marco Illustrato" (Prato, Passigli, 1850–53), and afterwards in the "Scritti Varii" of Padre Vincenzo Marchese. Florence: Le Monnier, 1855.

But in 1853 a biography of Savonarola appeared in France.[1] Its author, M. Perrens, had made accurate researches in Florence; he had procured in Piedmont, from the learned Abbé Bernardi, copies of many documents contained in the Marcian Library of Venice, several of which, although made known to Germany by Meier's work, were quite ignored in Italy and France. Enriched by these precious materials, his book, although here and there bearing too evident marks of haste, was nevertheless the most complete work that had appeared on Savonarola, and obtained great and deserved success.

The first volume, giving a narrative of facts, is delightful reading. The author has little eloquence, but he was the first to give us a clear, well-ordered, and ample account of all the events of Savonarola's life. The stirring, tumultuous drama of this life has a certain fascination and eloquence of its own which keep the reader's attention on the alert, and compensate for the author's defects. But unfortunately there is a radical fault in the book. Mons. Perrens has no clear grasp of his theme, no definite view of the personage he tries to describe, and this serves to keep the reader's mind in a very painful state of uncertainty, which the author seems almost wishful to increase. When we are on the point of admiring Savonarola's courage, he hastens to assure us that the Friar sometimes showed exaggerated timidity; when about to express our admiration for his steadfast opposition to the Medici, we find him accused of being their eulogist. It would almost appear as though Mons. Perrens feared to commit himself to any decided opinion of his hero, since no sooner does one escape him than he endeavours to attenuate its force. In the last and most terrible hours of Savonarola's life he turns from the persecuted man with words of condemnation, not only without having discovered any proofs to justify the harshness of his verdict, but even without any real examination of already known documents. Thus the reader is left discouraged, confused and uncertain whether Savonarola or his biographer be most deserving of blame.

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[1] "Jérôme Savonarole, sa vie, ses prédications, ses écrits," par F. T Perrens. Two Vols. Paris, 1853.

A somewhat serious defect is also to be found in the second volume. This treats of the Friar's works, but only gives mere summaries of them, and occasional extracts, without any decided verdict or criticism. Mons. Perrens frequently alleges his incapacity to judge religious doctrines, but falls into errors, for which even his modesty is no sufficient excuse. After having invariably represented Savonarola as a sincere Catholic, he refers us to an authority he considers weightier than his own, and gives in his Appendix a long chapter from Rudelbach, in which the German biographer has endeavoured to prove that Savonarola was a precursor of Luther. In this way the French author demolishes his own edifice. It is true that he entrusted the translation of this chapter to another hand, and we may therefore suppose that he was too hurried even to read it with attention, but how can such negligence be excused in so earnest a writer as Mons. Perrens? Nevertheless, this French biography being the most complete to which the Italian public had access at the time, its author has a distinct claim on our gratitude.

Other works had appeared and were appearing on the same theme, but all of far slighter merit. In France Rio's "Art Chretien" [1] comprised some very eloquent pages upon Savonarola. In Germany Hase published a short popular biographical sketch of the Friar, and Lenau a little poem full of force and imagination.[2] In England many biographies of Savonarola have appeared, but are all mere compilations, written without any real knowledge of the facts, and with the sole purpose of claiming the Prior of St. Mark's as one of the martyrs of the Reformation. The last English work, published in 1853, in two stout volumes, has somewhat more merit.[1] The author, Mr. Madden, professes moderate Catholic opinions, but is over-anxious to attribute his own views to Savonarola, and while assuring us that he has most carefully studied the subject, shows so slight an acquaintance with its time and place, that his book is brimful of mistakes. To cite one of many instances, he tells us, as a proof of Savonarola's great and untiring activity, that, after preaching in Santa Maria del Fiore, he also preached in the Duomo (the identical church) on the same day! Thus the book is quite useless to Italians, and conveys most inexact ideas to foreigners. England, the country of great historians, has produced no work on Savonarola worthy of its fame.[2]

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[1] "Art Chrétien," par Rio. Paris, 1836.

[2] "Neue Propheten, Drei historisch-politische Kirchenbilder," von D. Karl Hase. Leipzig, 1851. These are three essays on Joan of Arc, Savonarola, and the Anabaptists. "Savonarola, ein Gedicht," von Nicolaus Lenau. Vierte Auflage: Stuttgart and Tubingen, 1853.

Having been engaged for many years upon a biography of Savonarola, the appearance of the above-mentioned works by no means discouraged me from the task, but rather served as an incitement to higher efforts, by reminding me of the duty of carrying it out with unsparing labour and research.[3] For the accomplishment of my purpose, I made it a rule to read all modern works upon the subject, but to rely upon no authority but that of contemporary writers, Savonarola's own works, and original documents ; and, warned by frequent experience of the danger of quoting second-hand, to read and verify everything with my own eyes.

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[1] "The Life and Martyrdom of Girolamo Savonarola, illustrative of the History of Church and State Connexion," by R. R. Madden. London, 1854.

[2] The works of Perrens and Madden were reviewed by me at greater length in the "Archivio Storico Italiano," N.S., vol. iii. 1856.

[3] Among more recent works, we must mention the "Vita di Frà Jeronimo Savonarola," by Bartolommeo Aquarone. Two Vols. Alessandria, 1857 and 1858. As the work of a friend, and published almost simultaneously with my own, I refrain from passing any judgment upon it.

The earlier biographies had, of course, to be studied as well as the modern, and among the former the best were those of Father Pacifico Burlamacchi and Count Giovan Francesco Pico della Mirandola. Burlamacchi, a Lucchese of high birth, had been one of the most constant of Savonarola's hearers, and was moved by his discourses to assume the Dominican frock. He entered the monastery of San Romano in Lucca in 1499—*i.e.*, the year after Savonarola's martyrdom, and died in 1519 in the odour of sanctity. He had enjoyed intercourse with Savonarola and known his most intimate friends; he had discoursed with eyewitnesses of the chief events of the Friar's life, and had seen many of them himself. His work, without being that of a trained historian, has much of the simple force of an old chronicle, is carefully written, and shows an intimate knowledge of facts. After remaining long unknown, the Manuscript began to circulate in monasteries, and served as a model for numerous other biographies of no special value, compiled by devout fanatics. It was finally published in 1761 among Mansi's "Addizioni alla Miscellanea del Baluzio,"[1] and besides the miracles narrated by Burlamacchi, others were added in the words of Father Timoteo Bottonio, who cannot be regarded as a trustworthy authority.

Count Giovan Francesco Pico della Mirandola, nephew of the famous Giovanni Pico, had personally known Savonarola and conceived the deepest admiration for him. He had lived in Florence during the most eventful years of the career he sought to describe; he had witnessed the martyrdom of his hero, and devoutly cherished his relics. He was a philosopher, an elegant Latinist, and one of the most learned and purest men of his time; he collected facts with incredible diligence; wrote and rewrote his book many times, and made numerous changes in its construction; submitted it to the judgment of numerous friends of Savonarola, and finally gave it to the world in 1530.[1]

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[1] It was afterwards published separately, and reprinted later with the addition of a "Lettera Apologetica ; Vita del P. F. Girolamo Savonarola," by P. F. Pacifico Burlamacchi, of Lucca. New Edition. Lucca, 1764.

The great resemblance between these two biographies gave rise to the idea that the one was copied or modelled from the other. But the evidence of contemporary writers and the examination of ancient codices prove that, in the main, each is independent of the other. And in the course of my studies I acquired great confidence in both authors, and found them far more deserving of belief than might be supposed from the fanatic and superstitious tone so often to be noted in their pages.

It would be a superfluous task to cite all the unedited biographies of which I made use. I need only mention those of Frà Marco della Casa,[2] Frà Placido Cinozzi,[3] and a third and more important one, of unknown authorship[4] in the Magliabecchiana Library of Florence. All three are by contemporaries and fellow-brethren of Savonarola. There is another and better known biography by P. Serafino Razzi, also a Friar of St. Mark. His work is only a compilation from Pico and Burlamacchi; for he was not a contemporary of Savonarola, and had little aptitude for original research. But he had conversed with certain old Florentines who had known the Friar, including the octogenarian, Lorenzo Violi, of whose manuscript diaries "Giornate," he made an abridgment. He also collected and transcribed a large number of Apologies and other works on the life and doctrines of his hero.[1]

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[1] "Vita R. P. Fr. Hieronymi Savonarolæ," auctore Ill. D. Joan. Franc. Pico. Parisiis, 1674. This edition, revived by Quétif, is in two volumes; the second and half of the first contain additions by Quétif, who also published a third volume, containing Savonarola's letters.

[2] In the Monastery of St. Mark.

[3] Written in the form of letters, and contained in Codex 2053, of the Riccardian Library.

[4] Convent MSS., I., VII., 28.

After studying the biographies I began to search for new documents, particularly for all relating to the trail, which had always excited my keen curiosity. The printed report of the trial was generally known; but Savonarola underwent three examinations, and I succeeded in finding the manuscript records of the second and third, and also of the trial of his fellow-martyrs, Frà Silvestro and Frà Domenico. Although containing important information, these documents need very cautious examination, for they were much changed and falsified by the notary of the Florence Signory. The examinations or depositions of many other persons, either implicated in Savonarola's case, or simply interrogated as witnesses, are in a codex of the Florence archives, first discovered, but only cursorily examined, by Meier. This codex was extremely useful on account of the light thrown by it on Savonarola's last days; and help was also derived from other documents found, but not studied by Meier.

Fresh research brought to light a copy of Frà Domenico's genuine and unaltered statements written in his own hand. But, as to Savonarola's avowals, there was no hope of obtaining them. He had not been allowed to write his own confession; his replies had been falsified by the notary who transcribed them, and, with added alterations, had been used for the printed report of the first examination and the manuscript version of the two others. The first notes taken by the scribe might have contained some germ of truth; but these documents had been kept hidden for some time and then destroyed. Nevertheless I discovered the manuscripts of two writers who had seen the original notes, and, comparing them with the falsified reports, had pointed out their essential divergences.[1]

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[1] Razzi's works exist, in manuscript, in the Magliabecchian, Riccardian, and Laurentian Libraries.

One of these two MSS. consisted of the third part of the "Vulnera Diligentis" of Frà Benedetto, the devoted friend and follower of Savonarola. I shall have occasion elsewhere to speak of this work and its author, and need only say here that the third part, relating almost exclusively to the trial, was unknown to all. The other manuscript was the "Apologia" or "Giornate" of Lorenzo Violi, long believed to be lost, and which I had the good luck to disinter. Violi had taken down nearly all Savonarola's sermons as they fell from his lips; in this work he recorded everything that he had seen or heard of the Friar's life, in the form of a long "Apologia," and continued his task until loss of sight at the age of eighty compelled him to relinquish his pen. From these documents I gleaned the fullest account of Savonarola's trial down to the minutest particulars. Even the obscure and much contested incident of the Ordeal by Fire was now seen in its true light.

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[1] So much curiosity was roused by my discovery of these documents, particularly of the reports of the trials, that others hastened to profit by it and to forestall me in the publication of some of the papers. I was powerless to prevent this, much time being still needed for the due completion of my work. Meanwhile Professor Paolo Emiliani-Giudici published in the Appendix to his "Storia dei Comuni Italiani" not only the printed report of Savonarola's first trial, but the MSS. of the two others discovered by myself. The learned compilers of the "Giornale Storico degli Archivi Toscani" (vol. ii.) published the trials of Frà Domenico and Frà Silvestro, also unearthed by me; together with the examinations of other prisoners and witnesses. The latter documents had been first mentioned by Herr Meier, and, as Father Marchese had announced in 1855 ("Scritti Vari," p. 246, note 2), I had collected them for my work. I accordingly reproduced all these documents, not only because, in a literary sense, they were mine, but because they had been hastily and not always correctly printed, without notes or comments of any kind. All this, however, is a story of the past. Since then I have received much courtesy and assistance from the Florence archives, and owe special thanks to Comm. Guasti, Professor Paoli, and Cav. Gherardi.

Having arrived at a precise and accurate knowledge of the main facts of Savonarola's life, I next undertook an accurate study of his writings. This soon taught me to marvel at the incredible and unpardonable negligence of his biographers; for I found that they could not have read the works they so frequently quoted. No other explanation can account for their blundering statements, their imperfect acquaintance with Savonarola's doctrines, and their absolute ignorance of his philosophical system. They never discovered that they were dealing with a great thinker; for while dwelling upon some utterly insignificant composition, they pass without notice all those revealing the originality of the author's mind. Although professedly eager to ascertain the nature of Savonarola's meditations in prison, and the state of his mind, they barely glance at the writings composed during his confinement. Consequently I resolved to leave no line of his works unread, and devoted years of patient study to this arduous but indispensable task. Without it no authentic biography could have been achieved.[1]

Without limiting my inquiries to Savonarola's printed works, I also searched for his letters and unpublished writings, and succeeded in finding a few. In order to penetrate, as it were, to the inmost recesses of his mind, I examined his marginal notes to his own copies of the Bible, written in his microscopic and almost undecipherable hand. I was the first, and perhaps the only student of these notes, and they enable me to state that Savonarola was always true to himself; that in the solitude of his cell, in his most private manuscripts, he repeated exactly what he preached from the pulpit to the mass of his hearers. His letters chiefly serve to show us on what terms he stood with friends and kinsmen, and throw light on his dispute with Rome, which is further illustrated by some Borgian Briefs that were hitherto unknown.

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[1] It is a duty to record that it was chiefly by the kindness of Count Carlo Capponi that I was enabled to thoroughly carry out this investigation. His collection of the works, pamphlets, and letters of Savonarola, and of all materials for the Friar's life, is so complete and well arranged, that no other private collection in Italy or elsewhere can, I think, be compared with it. The kindness with which Count Capponi placed his treasures at my disposal calls for a public expression of gratitude. I would also tender my thanks to many others for their generous assistance, and above all to Father Marchese, who has always encouraged me with paternal affection. Dr. Danzi, of Milan, was another true friend, for, without being a personal acquaintance, he entrusted me with all the documents in his collection.

Savonarola's political career and the vicissitudes of the Florentine Republic also demanded fresh examination. For this purpose neither the splendid narratives of Nardi, Machiavelli, and Guicciardini, nor the more recent researches of Meier and Marchese, could suffice. By means of the decrees (*provvisioni*), or rather laws of the Republic, I was enabled to form an accurate idea of its constitution; by means of the deliberations (*pratiche*), or, as they may be called, drafts of the speeches delivered in the Councils, I gained intimacy with the men and passions that had re-moulded and breathed new life into the Republic. I am not aware that any other modern writer has made use of these Florentine *pratiche*, but I believe them to contain unexplored treasures of the wisdom and eloquence of Italian politicians of the past. Finally, by collating all these documents with Savonarola's sermons I ascertained that the Friar of St. Mark was beyond all doubt the leading spirit of the great political drama before me.

It will now be easily understood why it was impossible in this biography to keep the narrative portion separate from the examination of my hero's works, and why I should be so frequently obliged to quote his own words. The books, precepts, and sermons of Savonarola are not to be solely judged from a literary point of view; they were his chief and almost only mode of action, the instruments he used for the reconstitution of the Republic, and by which he paved the way for the moral and religious regeneration of the whole nation. Accordingly his written and spoken words are one with his actions, and often constitute in themselves some of the most important events of his life. Besides, in these eighteen or twenty volumes of sermons and ascetic works, in these numerous letters and pamphlets, flashes of lofty genius and marvellous bursts of eloquence are frequently hidden in a thicket of scholastic and even puerile conceits. Thus, without a biographer to act as pioneer, and clear the way by hard strokes, there was great danger that the genius of Savonarola might still remain partially buried and unknown.[1]

It is needless to enumerate all the other chronicles and manuscripts I have collated or read. The unpublished letters of private individuals, secret reports of the ambassadors and spies of Italian governments, a large number of religious and political pamphlets, popular poems, both manuscript and in print—all were ransacked. Nothing, in short, was neglected that might aid to the production of a faithful portrait of the men and the passions of the time.

In bringing this too lengthy preface to an end, I must first confess that, although assisted by research and documentary evidence, my best aid in the accomplishment of my work was the fact of having undertaken it unhampered by preconceived ideas. The subject was chosen because it seemed to me that the part played by Savonarola in the events of the century closing the Middle Ages and initiating the dawn of modern civilization was as great as it was unrecognized. And precisely for that reason I saw that this fifteenth century Friar must not be converted into an advocate of the ideas and passions of the present age. This history of Savonarola is free from all political bias, and aims at neither the attack nor the defence of Rome. Had I found any proof that he was a heretic or an unbeliever I should have certainly represented him as such. But, on the contrary, I have found him to be essentially Catholic, and therefore presented him to the reader in that light. To use history as an engine of party feelings and opinions—no matter of how pure and noble a kind—is to go on a false system. For whoever undertakes a narrative of past events stands on sacred and inviolable ground. There is no need for the author to come forward as the advocate of virtue and freedom; on the contrary, he should feel convinced that the history of mankind is a living drama in itself, leading man on to liberty, elevating his moral tone, and developing his civilization. Therefore, in venturing on even the slightest change, he attempts to correct the ways of Providence, and only succeeds in destroying their sublime harmony.

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[1] I may repeat here what was mentioned elsewhere in the first edition. Extracts from documents and printed works are frequently given in our text, sometimes in the form of an extended summary, with modernized spelling, at others verbatim. In quoting from Savonarola's works, I have generally modernized the orthography and corrected the more glaring grammatical mistakes. This was necessary to avoid too sudden changes of form and language in the text. But in the Appendix, to the Italian edition, I give the original words, blunders and all. I should add that Count Capponi's collection of Savonarola's works has been recently purchased by the Italian Government, and, together with a no less precious store presented by Count Guicciardini, is now in the National Library of Florence.

In writing the history of Girolamo Savonarola and his times, I have adhered to these rules, and should I succeed in proving that his name is one of the most glorious on Italy's noble list of thinkers, heroes, and martyrs, my end will be achieved and my labour abundantly rewarded.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THE BIRTH OF SAVONAROLA TO HIS BECOMING A MONK.

(1452–1475.)

THE Savonarola were originally of Paduan descent. The first of the family mentioned by the chroniclers was Antonio Savonarola, a valiant warrior, who, about the year 1256, defended the city against the tyrant, Ezzelino. In memory of this event one of the gates of Padua was named Porta Savonarola, and still bears the same designation. In the middle of the fifteenth century a branch of the family removed to Ferrara at the request of its lord, one of the then sovereign House of Este. Niccolò III. was a lover of letters and the arts, a patron of learning, and, taking pride in attracting distinguished men to his Court, invited Michele Savonarola to attend on his person. This Savonarola was a physician of high repute in the Paduan school, was very learned, fervently pious, and extremely charitable in bestowing his services on the poor.[1] His name has been transmitted to posterity not only by numerous valuable works,[1] but also by his affection for his grandson, Girolamo Savonarola, who was afterwards to achieve a worldwide celebrity.

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[1] "Vita R. P. F. Hieronymi Savonarolæ," auctore J. F. Pico, p. 4; Cappelli, "Frà Girolamo Savonarola," &c., p. 6, and fol. Several notices of the Savonarola family are to be found in a codex of the eighteenth century, in the Landau Library in Florence, compiled from original documents preserved in the same library. Antonio Savonarola's merits re also mentioned in the chronicles of the period.

Settling in Ferrara in 1440, he taught with success in the University, and won much honour and rich reward in his capacity of physician to the Court. Pope Nicholas made him a Knight of Jerusalem, and the successors of Marquis Nicholas III. added to his lands and revenues, and even invested him with a small fief.[2] Lionello, the immediate successor of Nicholas, retained him as medical attendant, increased his salary, and exempted him from all other duties, in order to leave him leisure to write.[3]

Of Michele's son Niccolò little is known. It appears that he studied medicine and school lore; but no writings remain to record his name. He dawdled through life as a hanger-on at the Court, and squandered the fortune gained by his father's talents and industry.

His wife Elena, one of the illustrious Mantuan family of Bonacossi, seems to have been a woman of lofty temper and almost masculine firmness. The chroniclers[4] have little to say of her, but that little testifies to the nobility of her character. Certainly, the letters of her son Girolamo, who n the worst and most painful moments of his life seems to have turned to her as his best and surest confidante, not only confirm the report of her virtues, but serve to enforce the repeated observation that one of the most constant and unchanging affections of great minds is a love, almost amounting to worship, for their maternal parent.

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[1] Some of his printed works passed through many editions, namely: "Practica de ægritudinibus," Papiæ, 1486; "Practica canonica de febribus," Venetiis, 1498; "De Balneis omnibus Italiæ sive totius orbis, proprietatibusque eorum," Venetiis, 1592; "De arte conficiendi aquam vitæ," &c., Hagenoæ, 1532; "In Medicinam practicam Introductio," &c., Argentinæ, 1533. There are also many unpublished works, several of which are on religious and moral topics. Among these a "Confessionale" and a "Dialogus moralis" (*vide* I. I. Mangeti, "Bibliotheca scriptorum medicorum veterum et recentiorum;" Cappelli, "Frà Girolamo Savonarola," &c., at the beginning; L. N. Cittadella, "La nobile famiglia Savonarola in Padova ed in Ferrara," Ferrara, 1867).

[2] The original patents are in the Landau Library.

[3] This is recorded in a very remarkable patent, also preserved in the Landau Library. *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. i.

[4] *Vide*, among others, Frà Benedetto of Florence, "Vulnera Diligentis." This work gives several important and authentic details on Savonarola, and there are two manuscript copies of it in the National Library of Florence, Class xxxiv., Cod. 7, and Class xxxvii., Cod. 318. Concerning Frà Benedetto, the disciple of Savonarola, and who wrote other works on his master, we shall have frequent occasion to speak.

Girolamo Savonarola, the subject of this biography, came into the world on September 21, 1452,[1] third of the seven children to whom Niccolò and Elena gave birth. His biographers tell marvellous tales of him even in his earliest infancy; but every one knows how little faith can be lent to similar accounts. It is easier to believe that he was by no means an attractive child; for he was neither pretty nor playful, but already serious and subdued. Probably no one foresaw the destiny that awaited him. Nevertheless, the eldest son, Ognibene, having adopted a military career, and the second, who was probably a youth of scanty parts, devoting himself to the care of the paternal estate, all the hopes of the family were concentrated on Girolamo, even in his boyhood; and it was their dream to see him become a great physician. The Savonarola naturally held the medical profession in the highest esteem, as the source of the dignity and honour of their house. Accordingly the grandfather, Michele, gave his tenderest care to Girolamo. With the patience and simple directness gained by long years and experience, this wise old scientist devoted himself to the development of his grandson's intellect, the careful unfolding of its budding thoughts and ideas. Such a training was undoubtedly the best of schools, and the boy soon rewarded his grandsire's devotion by showing a true passion for study. So great was his ardour for books that even those beyond his comprehension were eagerly seized upon and ransacked for hidden treasures.

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[1] According to the biographers these children were: Ognibene, afterwards a soldier; Bartolommeo, of unknown profession; Girolamo; Marco, who, as Frà Maurelio, received the monastic robe in St. Mark's from his brother's hands in 1497; and Alberto, who took his Doctor's degree April 20, 1491, and became a distinguished physician; Beatrice, who remained at home unmarried, and Chiara, who, on becoming a widow, returned to live at home with her brother Alberto. But Signor L. N. Cittadella, in his work "La nobile famiglia Savonarola in Padova ed in Ferrara," places the children in the following order: Chiara, Alberto, Bartolommeo, Ognibene, Girolamo, Marco, Beatrice. This gentleman is known to be a careful writer, but as he does not give the source of this information, we prefer to rely on the authority of the old chroniclers and biographers.

Unfortunately the grandfather soon died,[1] and the boy was left to the sole guidance of his father, who began to instruct him in philosophy. In those days natural science was merely regarded as one of the chief branches of philosophy, and the latter, although used as a preliminary to the study of medicine, was, as we all know, purely scholastic. It is true that in some parts of Italy, and even in Ferrara, a faint glimmer of the dawning Platonic philosophy was beginning to appear, together with some faithful translations of Aristotle from the original Greek; but these things were considered to be daring innovations; and the young Savonarola had to study the works of St. Thomas Aquinas, and the Arabic commentaries on Aristotle. These were given to him as indispensable guides and introductions to the study of medicine; and it was strange to behold so young a boy plunged in this sea, or rather labyrinth, of confused syllogisms, and finding so much pleasure in the task as soon to become a very skilful disputant.[1] The works of St. Thomas fascinated him to an almost inconceivable extent; he would be absorbed in meditating on them for whole days at a time, and could hardly be persuaded to turn his attention to studies better adapted to his medical training. Thus, while the natural tendency of his mind drew him in one direction, his parents urged him in another; and, though no one could foresee it, this was the beginning of the struggle that was afterwards to decide his future and crush the hopes of his kindred. Enamoured of truth, and as yet unconscious of his own powers, he was still filled with the joyous intoxication felt by the young when all nature seems to gaily beckon them across the threshold of life. He devoured the ancient writers, composed verses, and studied drawing and music.[2]

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[1] The exact year of his death is unknown. Fossi, in his well-known "Catalogo Magliabecchiano," tells us: "Eius obitus contigisse videtur circa finem, anni 1461, vel tardius." Capelli gives the same date, 1461, in his "Frà Girolamo Savonarola," &c., p. 10; but Cittadella, in "La Casa di Frà Girolamo Savonarola in Ferrara" (Ferrara, 1873), states that there are documents proving that Michele died between 1466 and 1468. A diploma of Duke Borso, dated 20th October, 1461, conferring fresh rewards upon Michele Savonarola, "phisico nostro precarissimo," in the Landau Library, proves that Michele still lived at that date.

All particulars, however, of Savonarola's boyhood are unfortunately wanting. History seems to have purposely concealed from us by what process his nature was developed or his mind trained. We have no details of the progress of his studies, nor of the difficulties he had to encounter; no means of tracing the mental and spiritual growth of this man who was to play so prominent a part in the world's affairs. It may, perhaps, be taken for granted that his early days were marked by no facts sufficiently remarkable to be transmitted to posterity. Probably the true history of his youth consisted of private thoughts and secret impressions, such as could not be generally known. Therefore, to understand the state of his mind, we must study his material surroundings, inasmuch as he was at no time wholly absorbed in solitary meditation, but always felt drawn towards humanity and the people; always, indeed, preferring to share the life of his fellow-men, save when repelled by invincible disgust for their vices.

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[1] J. F. Pico, "Vita," &c., chap. ii. p. 9.

[2] Frà Benedetto, "Vulnera Diligentis," bk. i. chap. vii.; Burlamacchi, "Vita del P. F. Girolamo Savonarola," p. 4, new edition, Lucca, Giusti, 1784.

The deserted aspect of modern Ferrara, with its lonely, grass-grown streets, makes it difficult for us to realize the former splendour of the capital of the House of Este. Then it was a city of 100,000 inhabitants,[1] and its Court one of the most famous in Italy, was continually visited by princes, emperors, and popes, and the scene of interminable festivities. This was the Ferrara of Savonarola's childhood and youth. His family being attached to the Court, he must have heard continual mention of all these pageants and revellings, and received his earliest impressions from them. Accordingly it will be no digression from our subject to devote a few words to the Court of Ferrara.

In 1402 Niccolò III. was the reigning Marquess of Ferrara, and of the rich and fertile province of Modena, still annexed to that State. After sixteen years of continuous warfare with the lords of the neighbouring strongholds, he had at last subdued them by force of arms, cunning, and treachery; he was now an absolute sovereign, and devoted his peaceful reign to enhancing the glory of his Court. He began the erection of the cathedral tower, and the palace of Belriguardo; he built the church of Santa Maria di Belfiore and other splendid edifices. We have seen how Michele Savonarola came from Padua at his bidding, and he summoned many others in the same way, among them the celebrated scholar Guarino of Verona, to whom he entrusted the education of his two natural sons, Lionello and Borso. These boys were afterwards legitimized, and, by their father's express desire, named his successors, in preference to Ercole, his legitimate son, who was then an infant. Accordingly Lionello ascended the throne on Niccolò's decease, in 1441, and Borso succeeded Lionello in 1450. They reigned during difficult times. The extinction of the House of Visconti, the revolt of Milan, and the jealousy of Venice and the neighbouring States, had kindled war on all sides, so that it seemed impossible for the Este to avoid being embroiled with one or the other of the contending parties. Yet they not only contrived to remain neutral, but so often mediated successfully between hostile princes and States as to gain for Ferrara the title of "the land of peace." But the Este were chiefly renowned for the magnificence of their Court and as the first Italian potentates who were noted patrons of learning. Lionello, in fact, befriended many scholars; he was the protector of Guarino, Valla, Trapezunzio, and others: he composed Latin orations, Italian sonnets, founded the famous Este museums, caused the University to flourish, built the Hospital of St. Anna, and many public edifices. His Court was maintained with dazzling luxury, and the festivities held there at the time of his marriage were the talk of the whole country. But, after reigning only nine years, he died in 1450, and was succeeded by his brother Borso, who soon threw his munificence and splendour into the shade. The Marquis Borso was a man of the Medicean stamp, and, although not devoid of good qualities, even these were born of vanity and personal ambition. He loved justice, and caused it to be strictly observed whenever it did not clash with his interests; but better than justice itself he loved his title of "The Just," which was universally conferred upon him. He taxed all the citizens in equal proportions, supported the university at his own expense, introduced in Ferrara the new-born art of printing, founded the Carthusian monastery, fortified the city bastions on the banks of the Pò, and succeeded in extending his territories. The quarrels which had burst forth in Italy during Lionello's reign grew fiercer in his own, and he lived in more difficult times; nevertheless he preserved his neutrality, and was the chosen arbiter in nearly all disputes among the other Italian States. So widespread was his fame, that Indian princes sent him rich gifts in the belief that he was the king of all Italy.

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[1] Such, at least, is the census given by historians.

It may seem hazardous to assert that his great reputation was mainly acquired by the luxury of his Court and the perpetual festivities with which he entertained his people, yet this was undoubtedly the case. Borso's reputed justice never withstood any serious test; nor was his life free from grave reproach. The vaunted prudence enabling him to remain at peace while surrounded by fighting neighbours, really consisted in cautiously refusing to espouse any man's cause, and being always ready to join the stronger side. But as lord of Ferrara he was lavish of hospitality to all, had a rare collection of manuscripts and antiquities, was always seen dressed in gold brocade, and the richest stuffs in Italy were worn at his Court. He had the finest falcons, horses, and dogs that had ever been seen; he was even famous for the excellence of his buffoons, while descriptions of his State entertainments were printed and circulated throughout the whole of Italy.

In 1452 the Emperor Frederic III., with two thousand followers in his train, halted at Ferrara on his way to assume the imperial crown in Rome. Borso rode forth to meet him, attended by all his nobles and clergy, received him under a State canopy, and for ten successive days gave tournaments, banquets, concerts, and balls in his honour. The emperor having decided, on his return from Rome, to confer a ducal title upon Borso, all these festivities were then renewed on a still grander scale. A sumptuous platform was erected in the Piazza, and there the emperor sat enthroned, wearing his mantle and an imperial crown adorned with precious stones to the value of 150,000 florins. Borso, attired in cloth of gold and likewise loaded with jewels, issued from his palace attended by all the nobles of Ferrara, amidst the applause of the people and loud cries of "The Duke, the Duke! Long live Duke Borso!" Then, mounting the platform, Borso knelt at the emperor's feet, and received the coveted title.

But the festivities which Savonarola must have witnessed as a child were still more magnificent and given on a far more remarkable occasion. The fall of Constantinople in 1453, the increasing power of the Turks, and the consequent danger to Christendom, were continual subjects of interest; all yearned for a fresh crusade, but the general indifference and indolence were too great for any one to set it afoot. At last, in 1458, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, recently elected to the pontificate as Pope Pius II., summoned a council at Mantua under his own presidency, for the purpose of inciting the Christian Powers to war with the infidel. He set forth on his progress in 1459 with a *cortége* of incredible pomp, and with ten cardinals, sixty bishops, and many secular princes in his train. The cities through which he passed strove to outshine one another in the luxury and splendour of his reception. The Pontiff entered Florence borne on the shoulders of Galeazzo Maria Sforza and of the lords Malatesta, Manfredi, and Ordelaffi; and the festivals ordained him by the Republic were such as were generally accorded to no one but the emperor or some other great temporal potentate. At Ferrara the Pope made his entrance under a canopy of gold brocade; the streets through which he passed were carpeted with cloth and sprinkled with flowers; rich tapestries hung from the windows, and the city echoed with music and song. On reaching the cathedral, Guarino read him a long Latin oration, crammed with learned allusions and praise of the Holy Father. For a whole week Pius II. was detained in Ferrara by a succession of festivities. Continuing his journey under the same circumstances, he at last reached Mantua on May 27, 1459. There he made a marvellous display of eloquence in the Latin tongue, and moved his hearers to tears by his description of the woful sufferings of the Christians in Constantinople. Other Latin speeches were delivered by Francesco Filelfo and Ippolita, daughter of Francesco Sforza; and, lastly, the Greek ambassadors aroused the deepest and truest emotion by recounting the miseries of their country and the ferocious cruelty of the Turks. All the princes offered help in money and men, and Duke Borso promised the (for him) enormous sum of 300,000 florins. But it was soon seen that he had been more crafty than generous. For these grand preliminaries all ended in talk, and the foolhardy attempt of René of Anjou to conquer the Neapolitan kingdom with a handful of French sufficed to put an end to the proposed expedition to the East.

In 1460 the Pope returned to Ferrara without having achieved anything; nevertheless, his reception was even more splendid than before. The Duke went up the Pò to meet him in a magnificent barge, surrounded by a swarm of boats gaily decked with banners and musical instruments, spreading across the river from bank to bank. A multitude of youths dressed in white, and bearing wreaths in their hands, stood arrayed on the flower-strewn shores, and at the spot where the Head of the Church was to land, statues of the Pagan divinities were set up in his honour!

Savonarola must have certainly witnessed this pageant, and heard it long discussed. But it is not easy to say what depth of impression it made on his childish mind. His religious zeal would seem to have been severely shocked by similar profanities, and even in earliest youth his heart was torn by passions driving him to open war with the world around him.

Borso continued to lead this kind of existence, and the people of Ferrara to revel in these entertainments. Throughout Italy the same state of things unfortunately prevailed. Carelessness and corruption everywhere! From all sides Paganism invaded the land, and its inhabitants were absorbed in wanton and thoughtless enjoyment.

On the 9th of August, 1471, the Duke passed away, and was scarcely cold in his grave before Lionello's son, Niccolò, and Ercole I. (the legitimate son of Niccolò III.), who was now of age, fiercely disputed the succession by force of arms. Ercole proved the victor, and, entering Ferrara in triumph, was proclaimed sovereign by the people. At the same moment Niccolò's followers were slaughtered in the streets, and those who succeeded in escaping were condemned to death in contumacy. On the morrow feasting and dancing went on as usual, and the people seemed to forget the bloodshed of the previous day.[1] Such was the famous, splendid, jovial Court of the Este; such were the rulers courted, and probably praised to the skies, by Savonarola's kindred.

There is nothing to be gleaned from the biographers as to the effect of these facts on our hero's mind, nor of his judgment concerning them. They do not allude to the subject. But they describe his sad and lonely mode of life, his humble and dejected demeanour, his wasted form, his increasingly fervent devotion, the long hours he passed in church, and the frequency of his fasts. *Heu fuge crudeles terras, fuge litus avarum*, was the cry that often and, as it were, unconsciously issued from his lips.[2]

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[1] Muratori, "Antichità Estensi;" Sismondi, "Histoire des Républiques Italiennes," chap. lxxviii. (Bruxelles, 1839); Litta, "Famiglie Italiane;" Tiraboschi, "Storia della Letteratura," tom. vii. chap. ii.; Frizzi. "Memorie per la Storia di Ferrara," 2nd edition, vol. iv.

[2] *Vide* a letter to his father, of which we shall speak later on.

During this period he was entirely absorbed in studying the Scriptures and St. Thomas Aquinas, allowing himself no recreation save that of playing sad music on his lute, or writing verses expressing with a certain simple force the griefs that weighed upon his heart. As a specimen of these poetical efforts we may cite the "Canzone De ruina Mundi," composed in 1472, and clearly descriptive of his state of mind, and the dreariness of his thoughts:—

"Vedendo sotto sopra tutto il mondo,
Ed esser spenta al fondo
Ogni virtude ed ogni bel costume,
Non trovo un vivo lume
Nè pur chi di suoi vizii si' vergogni.

* * * *

Felice ormai chi vive di rapina
E chi dell' altrui sangue più si pasce;
Chi vedoe spoglia e i suoi pupilli in fasce,
E chi di povri corre alla ruina.
Quell' anima è gentile a peregrina
Che per fraude e per forza fa più acquisto;
  Chi sprezza il ciel con Cristo,
E sempre pensa altrui cacciare al fondo,
  Colui onora il mondo."[1]

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[1] Seeing the whole world overset; all virtue and goodness disappeared; nowhere a shining light; no one taking shame for his sins. . . . Happy now is he that lives by rapine, and feeds on others' blood. Who despoils widows and infants trusted to his care, who hastens the ruin of the poor! Gentle and beautiful of soul is he who wins most by fraud and violence: he who scorns Heaven and Christ, and ever seeks to trample on his fellows. He shall win honour in the world. . . . (*Vide* "Poesie di Jeronimo Savonarola," p. 31 fol. Florence: Baracchi, 1847.)

Some of these verses were published in the fifteenth century, either during the author's life or soon after, being included among his other works. Frà Benedetto afterwards made a collection of them from a "*copia fidelissima*," and his MS. is in a Magliabechian codex of the Florence National Library, cl. xxxv., cod. 90. Herr Meier was the first to make use of this codex in the Appendix to his valuable biography of Savonarola. Afterwards Signor Audin de Rians used the same MS. for his edition of the poems (1847) quoted above. Lastly, Count Carlo Capponi and Comm. Cesare Guasti published the "Poesie di Girolamo Savonarola, tratta dall' autografo" (Florence: Cecchi, 1862). The auto-

Savonarola was so strongly moved by these feelings that, as his biographers tell us, having been once taken by his parents to the ducal palace, he refused, with a firmness highly remarkable in so young a lad, ever to cross its threshold again.[1]

Certainly, that grim quadrangular building, with its four massive towers, guarded by moats and drawbridges, must then have seemed typical of the tyranny entrenched amidst the people of Ferrara. Its walls were as yet unhallowed by memories of Tasso and Eleonora, whose immortal spirits still seem to haunt its splendid halls, and dispel all gloomy associations. On the contrary, the castle had recently been the scene of Parisina's love-tragedy. In those times no one thought of visiting for amusement the subterranean dungeons guarded by seven gratings from the light of day. They were full of immured victims, and the clanking of chains and groans of human beings in pain could be heard from their depths, mingling with the strains of music and ceaseless revelry going on above, the ringing of silver plate, the clatter of majolica dishes, and clinking of Venetian glass. The young Savonarola, with his ardent mind and impassioned heart, must have been forcibly impressed by these contrasts, and throughout his life he preserved a painful remembrance of the scenes of those early days, when, almost delirious with grief, he could find no refuge save in church. Prayer,

graph MS. of which they made use does not appear to have been revised by the author. It would rather seem to have been the first rough sketch. The copy used by Frà Benedetto is less faulty, and certain of the corrections contained in it are to be found in the few poems published during Savonarola's life, in works revised by his own hand. For these reasons, and also to avoid reproducing old and incorrect spelling, we quote from the better known edition of 1847, only referring to the original autograph for the poems which remained unprinted until 1862, and were not included in Frà Benedetto's copy. We have written at length on this subject in the "Civiltà Italiana," issue of the 1st of January, 1865.

[1] Burlamacchi, "Vita," &c., p. 5 ; J. F. Pico, "Vita," &c., p. 9.

indeed, was his continual solace, and his tears would bedew the altar steps, where, stretched prostrate for hours at a time, he besought aid from heaven against the evils of this vile, corrupt, and dissolute age.

There dwelt at that time, close to his home, a Florentine exile of the illustrious name of Strozzi, who had an illegitimate daughter. An exiled citizen from Dante's native town must have had a special attraction for the young Savonarola. In fact, the latter regarded him as a victim of unjust persecution, a sufferer in the cause of patriotism and freedom. The exile's family seemed of altogether a different stamp from his Ferrarese acquaintances. When his eyes met the glance of the young Florentine maiden, he felt that first inward stirring of the heart by which men win belief in earthly happiness. The world lay before him irradiated by a new light; tumultuous hopes kindled his fancy, he dreamed of blissful days to come, and finally, full of ardour and confidence, he revealed his feelings to the object of his passion. What was not his grief on receiving a haughty reply to the effect that no Strozzi might stoop to alliance with a Savonarola! He met the insult with words of burning indignation,[1] but his heart was none the less crushed by it. His dream-world of long cherished hopes lay suddenly shattered before him; the happiness of his life had fled, and he was once more alone in the midst of the uncongenial herd. He was not yet twenty years of age; the recent occurrences on the succession of Ercole I. had led him to despair of his country, and the love on which his whole happiness depended had ended in a cruel delusion. Where now was his weary, heavy-laden soul to find rest? Thereupon his thoughts turned spontaneously to his Maker.

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[1] This love episode of Savonarola's youth, after long remaining unknown, was found recorded in Frà Benedetto's "Vulnera Diligentis," MS. *cit.*, bk. i. chap. ix. On this point also justice must be done to Herr Meier, who was the first to recur to Frà Benedetto's writings, and to appreciate their importance. Rediscovered at a much later date by Italians unacquainted with Meier's work, they were announced as a novelty. The researches of Cittadella in his pamphlet, "La Casa di Savonarola," prove that Savonarola's home was next to that of the Strozzi. And Cav. A. Gherardi has shown ("Nuovi Documenti," p. 7) that one Laodamia, the natural daughter of Roberto Strozzi, lived in Ferrara at that period, and was probably the object of Savonarola's passion. It should be remembered that Frà Benedetto learnt many of the particulars narrated in his life of Savonarola from his master's own lips.

> "Se non che una speranza
> Pur al tutto non lascia for partita,
> Ch'io so che in l'altra vita
> Ben si vedrà qual alma fu gentile,
> E chi alzò l'ale a più leggiadro stile." [1]

Religious feelings took complete possession of his soul, and, by creating a new source of comfort for his heart, opened a way of safety before him. His supplications were uttered with daily increasing fervour, and nearly always ended with these words: "Lord, make known to me the path my soul should tread!" [2] Worldly life became more and more irksome to him. All Ferrara was absorbed in the festivities of which the Duke was so crazily fond. The carnival of 1472 had been celebrated with greater splendour than usual, and Lent was devoted to the preparation of still grander pageants to welcome the arrival from Naples of the Duke's bride, Eleonora of Aragon. Increasingly angered and irritated by this state of things, Savonarola shunned all contact with his fellow-men. The plan of forsaking the world and seeking refuge in religion was already pressing on his mind, and his admiration for St. Thomas Aquinas inclined him to adopt the Dominican robe. At Faenza, in 1474, a sermon preached by an

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[1] *Vide* the same poem, "De ruina Mundi." It may be roughly translated thus: Yet one hope at least remains, for know I not that in the other life, 'twill well be seen whose was the fairest soul, whose wings were spread to noblest flight.

[2] *Vide* the letter to his father, before quoted.

Augustinian friar made so deep an impression on him that, the same day, he formed the irrevocable decision of devoting himself to the monastic life.[1]

He was full of cheerfulness on his way back to Ferrara, but no sooner was he beneath the paternal roof, than he realized how hard a struggle he would have to endure. It was necessary to hide his resolve from his parents, but his mother, as though already divining it, regarded him with a glance that pierced his heart; and he no longer dared to meet her eyes. This struggle went on for a whole year, and in after life Savonarola often recalled the intense anguish it had cost him. "Had I made my mind known to them," he would say, "verily my heart would have broken, and I should have renounced my purpose."[2] One day, towards the end of that period, April 23, 1475, he sat down, and, taking his lute in hand, sang so sad an air to its accompaniment that his mother was inspired with a foreboding of the truth, and, turning suddenly to him, piteously exclaimed: "Oh, my son, this is a token of separation!"[3] But he, making an effort, continued to touch the strings with trembling fingers, without once raising his eyes to hers.

The following day, the 24th of April, was the great festival of St. George, and Savonarola's parents went with all the rest of Ferrara to attend the celebration. This was the moment he had fixed upon to fly from his home, and directly he was left alone he set forth on his journey to Bologna. On reaching that city he hurried to the Monastery of St. Dominic, announced his intention of taking the vows, and asked to be employed in the humblest services. He craved to become the convent drudge, since he came, as he said, to do penance for his sins, and not, according to the general custom of the day, to *merely change from an Aristotle in the world to an Aristotle of the cloister.* He received instant admittance and began to prepare for his noviciate.

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[1] Savonarola refers to this incident in his sermons, saying that *one word* remained so strongly impressed on his heart, that he never forgot it, and that by the next year he was a monk. But as to this *one word* he always preserved a mysterious silence, refusing to reveal it even to his closest friends. *Vide* also Pico, Burlamacchi, Frà Benedetto, &c.

[2] *Vide* the already quoted letter to his father.

[3] Frà Benedetto, "Vulnera Diligentis," bk. i. chap. x.

But hardly was he alone in his cell, than his thoughts flew to his kindred, and without loss of time he wrote a most affectionate letter to his father on the 25th of April, in order to comfort him and justify his own flight. He was chiefly impelled to this step, he said, by the impossibility of any longer tolerating the gross corruption of the world, and by seeing vice exalted and virtue degraded throughout Italy. His decision had not been formed in childish haste, but after prolonged meditation and suffering. He had not had the courage to reveal his purpose beforehand, fearing lest his heart should fail him at the moment of putting it into execution. "Dearest father," he said in conclusion, "my sorrow is already so great, do not, I pray you, add to it by yours! Be strong, seek to comfort my mother, and join with her in granting me your blessing." [1]

Such was the tenour of his letter, and he also added that he had left some papers by his window descriptive of the state of his mind. The father lost no time in searching for them among his son's books, and found in the spot indicated a treatise entitled "Contempt of the World." This repeats the sentiments expressed in the letter, describes the manners of the period, and compares them with those of Sodom and Gomorrah. "Not one, not a single righteous man is left; it behoves us to learn from babes and women of low estate, for in these only doth there yet linger any shadow of innocence. The good are oppressed, and the people of Italy become like unto the Egyptians who held God's people in bondage. But already famine, flood, pestilence, and many other signs betoken future ills, and herald the wrath of God. Divide, O Lord, divide once again the waters of the Red Sea, and let the impious perish in the flood of Thy wrath!"[1]

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[1] This letter, so often quoted by us already, is given by all the biographers, but always incorrectly. Count Carlo Capponi, having discovered the original autograph, restored the true reading of it in a pamphlet (of which eighty copies only were printed) entitled "Alcune Lettere di Frà Girolamo Savonarola," Florence, 1858. This authentic reading being very rare, we subjoin a copy of it in Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. ii.

This short composition was believed by all the biographers to be lost, but was finally unearthed among the records of a Florentine family, to whom it had been confidentially entrusted by Marco Savonarola in 1604.

It has great interest as an evident proof that, even before becoming a monk, Savonarola foresaw the woes Italy was to suffer; and also that he already believed himself endowed with a special mission from God. He supplicates the Lord to divide the waves of the Red Sea for the passage of the righteous and to overwhelm the wicked, but at the same time he cannot conceal his expectation of one day wielding the rod that would command the waves. He vainly endeavoured to conceal this hope from himself, vainly sought humiliation by undertaking the lowest drudgery of the convent. Extraordinary hopes and designs were already stirring in his soul.

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[1] *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. iii. Signor Bartolommeo Aquarone, in his "Vita di Frà Jeronimo Savonarola" (vol. i. p. 19, and doc. iii.), states that the little composition, "Dispregio del Mondo," was only a set of verses contained in the Magliabecchiana Library, cl. vii. cod. 365. But the old manuscript of it, formerly belonging to the Gondi family, removes all doubt, inasmuch as it contains these words: "I remember how, on the 24th April, which was the Feast of St. George, in 1475, Geronimo, my son, student of the Art (*i.e.*, of medicine), left his home and went to Bologna, and entered the brotherhood of St. Dominic, in order to become a monk; and left to me Niccolò della Savonarola, his father, the consolations herein written for my comfort." This brief composition and the letter sent by Savonarola to his father were discovered by Count Carlo Capponi among the archives of the Gondi family. When publishing the letter in 1858, the Count alluded to the existence of the pamphlet, "Dispregio del Mondo," and finally brought out an edition of it of eighty copies only. (Florence: Bencini, 1862.) This, too, being a very rare work, is reproduced in the Appendix to the Italian edition.

We are ignorant of the effect produced by these writings on his parents; but it may be readily conceived that they were bitterly afflicted by their son's unexpected resolve, inasmuch as in his second letter Savonarola, somewhat impatiently, reproves their immoderate complaints. "If," said he, alluding to his elder brother's profession, "some temporal lord had girt me with a sword, and welcomed me among his followers, you would have regarded it as an honour to your house, and rejoiced; yet, now that the Lord Jesus Christ has girt me with His sword and dubbed me His knight, ye shed tears of mourning."[1] After this the parents were reduced to resignation, and Savonarola threw himself heart and soul into his new duties.

He was of middle height, of dark complexion, of a sanguineo-bilious temperament, and a most highly-strung nervous system. His dark grey eyes were very bright,[2] and often flashed fire beneath his black brows; he had an aquiline nose and a large mouth. His thick lips were compressed in a manner denoting a stubborn firmness of purpose; his forehead, already marked with deep furrows, indicated a mind continually absorbed in meditation of serious things. But although his countenance had no beauty of line, it expressed a severe nobility of character, while a certain melancholy smile endued his harsh features with so benevolent a charm as to inspire confidence at first sight. His manners were simple, if uncultured; his language rough and unadorned. But on occasion his homely words were animated by a potent fervour that convinced and subdued all his hearers.[1]

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[1] This unpublished letter is in the Riccardi Library, cod. 2053. *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. iv.

[2] Sometimes giving forth red flashes, says Frà Benedetto in his "Vulnera Diligentis."

While in the Monastery of St. Dominic he led a silent life, and became increasingly absorbed in spiritual contemplation. He was so worn by fasting and penance that, when pacing the cloisters, he seemed more like a spectre than a living man. The hardest tests of the noviciate seemed light to him, and his superiors were frequently obliged to curb his zeal. Even on days not appointed for abstinence he scarcely ate enough to support life. His bed was a grating with a sack of straw on it and one blanket; his clothing of the coarsest kind, but strictly clean; in modesty, humility, and obedience he surpassed all the rest of the brethren. The fervour of his devotion excited the wonder of the superiors, and his brother monks often believed him to be rapt in a holy trance. The cloister walls seemed to have had the effect of restoring his peace of mind by separating him from the world, and to have purified him of all desires save for prayer and obedience.

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[1] Besides the accounts of Pico and Burlamacchi, minute descriptions of Savonarola's appearance are to be found in Frà Benedetto's "Vulnera Diligentis," and the little poem, "Cedrus Libani," written in his master's honour, and first quoted by Meier. This poem was afterwards published by Father Marchese in the "Archivio Storico Italiano" (Appendix, vol. vii.). There are also three portraits of Savonarola of some artistic merit. One, in the gallery of the Uffizii, is an admirable *intaglio* in cornelian, by Giovanni della Corniola; another is a painting by Frà Bartolommeo della Porta, representing him as St. Peter Martyr—probably, therefore, finished after Savonarola's death—in the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence. The third, also attributed by some authorities to Frà Bartolommeo, belonged to Signor Ermolao Rubieri, and was left by him to his Florentine heirs.

These portraits represent Savonarola under three different aspects. In the intaglio we see the daring preacher vituperating the vices of Italy and prophesying her fall: he has an excited air, and his eyes seem to flash fire. The second depicts the martyr's goodness and benevolence. The third, a saint in rapt contemplation. Many other portraits exist, but they are not by contemporary artists, and their authenticity is doubtful. In all, Savonarola is represented with his cowl drawn over his head, save that in the Academy. In this a certain flatness of the upper part of the cranium may be observed: according to some writers this was why he always covered his head. The modern terra-cotta bust by Bastianini is also an excellent portrait. Cittadella's pamphlet, "La nobile Famiglia Savonarola," contains a list of all the Savonarola portraits and medals.

CHAPTER II.

FROM HIS ENTERING THE CLOISTER TO HIS FIRST ARRIVAL IN FLORENCE.

(1475–1481.)

SAVONAROLA passed seven years in the Dominican monastery of Bologna. In those lonely cloisters, and the majestic church where Niccolò Pisano's noble monument enshrines the remains of the founder of the Order, he spent his time in prayer and penance. But his learning and extraordinary mental gifts had quickly attracted the notice of his superiors, and instead of being employed in the menial work he had craved, he was charged with the instruction of the novices. At first it was grievous to him to be prevented from giving his whole time to prayer and religious exercises; but then, remembering that obedience was his first duty, he willingly devoted himself to the novel task.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to suppose that Savonarola's whole mind and heart were absorbed in the duties of obedience and humility. His spirit, though full of faith, was equally full of daring and ardour. The corruption of the age had driven him to the cloister, and prayer and solitude seemed to have brought him peace. But whenever he reflected on the miserable state of the Church he was roused to fury, and in the heat of his indignation formed venturous projects which the bonds of religious discipline and the utmost efforts of his will were alike impotent to restrain.

During the same year of exalted fervour, in which he had fled from the world, he wrote a canzone entitled "De ruina Ecclesiæ," exhaling the most secret thoughts of his soul. In this poem he asks the Church—represented in the likeness of a chaste virgin—"Where are the ancient doctors of the law; the ancient saints; where the learning, love, and purity of olden times?" And the virgin, taking him by the hand, leads him into a cavern, and replies—"When I beheld proud ambition invade Rome, and contaminate all things, I fled here for refuge."

> "*Ove io conduco la mia vita in pianto.*"
> ("Where I spend my life in tears.")

She then shows him the wounds disfiguring her beautiful body; and thereupon Savonarola turns in his grief to the saints in heaven and bids them mourn this dire misfortune:

> "*Prostrato è il tempio e lo edifizio casto.*"
> ("Cast down is the temple, and the edifice of chastity.")

"But who has brought things to this pass?" he resumes. And the Church, alluding to Rome, replies, "Una fallace, superba meretrice" (a false, proud harlot). Then the devout young novice, the humble, solitary monk, reveals his whole soul in the following words:—

> "*Deh! per Dio, Dona,*[1]
> *Se romper si potria quelle grandi ali!*"
> ("O God, Lady, that I might break those spreading wings!")

To which the Church replies, almost in a tone of reproof:—

> "*Tu piangi e taci; e questo meglio parme.*"[2]
> ("Weep and keep peace; so seemeth best to me.")

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[1] Donna—Lady.

[2] "Poesie del Savonarola," Canzone ii., with the author's comments. A few of these poems bear the date of the year in which they were written.

Such, then, was Savonarola's convent life: while finding comfort in fasting and prayer, and recreation in teaching the novices, his heart was overwhelmed with grief, and stirred to irrepressible indignation by beholding the debasement and corruption of the Christian Church. He weeps and keeps silence, it is true, but again and again he is moved by the thought, "O God! that those spreading wings could be crushed, those wings of perdition!" If we realize what an effect the events daily happening throughout Italy must have made on so excited a mind, the dreadful pictures he must have conjured up of the obscenities of the Roman Court, we shall understand the burning indignation of his naturally inflammable spirit.

The scandalous corruption of the papacy, dating from the death of Pius II. in 1464, had already begun, and was to reach its climax under Alexander VI. The bad faith and unbounded avarice of Paul II. were soon patent to all the world; and when this pontiff was succeeded in 1471 by Francesco della Rovere as Pope Sixtus IV., a still sadder time was foreseen to await the Church. It was publicly asserted that the election of the new Pope had been carried by simony; and Rome echoed with the names of those who had sold their votes and obtained preferments in exchange. The scandalous lust of Sixtus was literally unbounded; the lavishness of his expenditure only equalled by his unquenchable thirst for gold; and so greatly was he blinded by his passions, that he shrank from no infamy to accomplish his wicked aims, and no act was too scandalous for him to commit.

The treasures accumulated by the grasping avarice of Paul II. disappeared almost instantaneously; and the dazzling splendour of the nephews of Sixtus soon proved into whose hands they had been poured. There were four of these nephews. One was made Prefect of Rome; another a cardinal, afterwards Pope Julius II.; the third purchased the city of Imola for the sum of 40,000 gold ducats, and married the daughter of Galeazzo Sforza; but the worst of the four, and the Pope's favourite, was Pietro Riario. The strong affection of Sixtus for this youth, aged twenty-six, caused many infamous rumours in Rome. From a simple friar he was suddenly raised to the dignity of cardinal-prelate, with the title of San Sisto; he was named Patriarch of Constantinople and Archbishop of Florence. He had unbounded influence at Court, and whenever he went there the streets overflowed with the followers in his train, while his receptions were even more crowded than those of the Pope. As a contemporary writer informs us,[1] his luxury surpassed all that was displayed by our forefathers, or can even be imagined by our descendants. On receiving the ambassadors of France he gave them a banquet, to which nearly all the arts known at the period were called to contribute. The land was ransacked for all that was most rare and precious; no means was spared to achieve results such as no future age should be able to reproduce; and the rhymed descriptions of this festival were not only circulated throughout Italy, but across the Alps and all over Europe. When Eleonora of Aragon, daughter of the Neapolitan king, halted in Rome on the way to her nuptials at Ferrara (1473), the reception accorded to her was of unparalleled magnificence. The bride was met by a procession of cardinals and ambassadors, who led her to the Pope's presence through streets draped with rich stuffs and tapestries; she was then conducted to a palace the young Riario had erected expressly for her use, next to his own dwelling. Its walls were of precious woods; its interior brilliant with gilding and shining silks; the plates, beakers, and other table utensils were all of silver and gold.[2]

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[1] Jacopo Ammanati, Cardinal of Pavia, "Papiensis Cardinalis Epistola 548. Ad Franciscum Gonzagam Cardinalem."

[2] Sismondi, "Histoire des Républiques Italiennes," vol. vi. chap. i.; Muratori, "Antichità Estensi," in "The Life of Duke Ercole I."

Thus Cardinal Riario, in less than a year, had squandered the sum of 200,000 florins, and notwithstanding his numerous and very lucrative appointments, incurred a debt of 60,000 florins. But this did not have the effect of checking his excesses; on the contrary, he went to Milan the same year, and rivalled the luxury of Duke Galeazzo, one of the most dissolute of Italian princes. He afterwards went to Venice, and there plunged into such depths of debauchery, that at last his strength failed, and, returning to Rome, he died on January 5, 1474. In this way that scandal of the papacy, known to history by the name of nepotism, continued to spread and flourish; and Sixtus IV. went on reigning in the same fashion to his death, in 1484. Notwithstanding the great corruption of the age, general uneasiness was excited by the degraded condition of the Church, general abhorrence felt for the scandalous lives of the Pope's nephews, and even for the Pope himself, who, in his greed for power, his avarice, and lust, blindly gave vent to all his passions.[1]

But wretched as was the aspect of the States of the Church, that of the rest of Italy was equally disheartening. Those were truly miserable times. Men not only mourned their long-lost liberty, but the absence in the ruling tyrants of the energy and political gifts by which their predecessors had risen to power. All strength of character, all ardour of ambition had vanished; everywhere the race of princes seemed fallen into decay. In the kingdom of Naples Alphonso the Magnanimous had been succeeded (1458) by Ferdinand I. of Aragon, who might have been fitly surnamed "the Cruel," for he overcame his enemies solely by cunning, deceit, and treason, and pushed his meanness and avarice to the extent of meddling in trade, to his own advantage and the injury of his subjects. In Florence, the sagacious, keen-witted Cosimo de' Medici had been succeeded in 1465 by the incapable Piero, who so endangered the supremacy of his house during his brief reign that, had he lived longer, it would have been impossible for his son Lorenzo to grasp the reins of government. In Milan, the valiant general and astute politician, Francesco Sforza, had been succeeded in 1466 by the feeble Galeazzo; and lastly, in Venice, the able and ambitious rule of Francesco Foscari had been followed in 1457 by that of Pasquale Malipiero, whose chief enterprises consisted of festivals in the Square of St. Mark. So general a degradation had almost the air of a strange freak of destiny, but is easily accounted for by the fact that, whereas the former rulers had fought their way to power over the heads of their enemies, and through innumerable obstacles and dangers, their sons, born in peace and reared in Courts, were only trained to luxurious ease.

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[1] *Vide* Sismondi, Leo, Gregerovius, &c.; Steph. Infessuræ, "Diarium Curiæ Romæ," in Yo. Ge. Eccardi, "Corpus historicorum medii ævi," tom. ii., Lipsiæ, 1723; Platina, "De Vitis Pontificum," Basiliæ, 1523. Rudelbach, "H. Savonarola, und seine Zeit, aus den Quellen dargestellt. Erste Abtheilung: die Signatur des funfzehnten Jahrhunderts," pp. 4–16 Hamburg, 1835.

As though Italy were not sufficiently crushed by all these evils, others, equally serious, combined to assail her. By a reaction against the feeble tyranny of her rulers, daring spirits arose among her people, ready to resort to the most desperate deeds, rather than submit to the actual state of things. Conspiracy was rampant throughout those years. In 1476 three plots were hatched. Girolamo Gentile tried to deliver Genoa from the Milanese yoke; Olgiati, Visconti, and Lampugnani assassinated Duke Galeazzo in church, and were themselves torn to pieces by the enraged populace in the streets of Milan; Niccolò d'Este, with a band of six hundred men, tried to gain possession of Ferrara and overthrow his brother, Duke Ercole, but, together with most of his followers, perished in the attempt. Thus, all these plots ended in the destruction of their authors, and only increased the misery of the people by consolidating the power and rousing the cruelty of their oppressors.

Nevertheless, undismayed by danger, men were rather urged by it to more desperate ventures, and no year passed without fresh attempts. The most terrible conspiracy of all was that of the Pazzi in Florence. On April 26, 1478, while Mass was being celebrated in the cathedral, and at the moment of the elevation of the Host, Giuliano de' Medici was stabbed by the Pazzi. Lorenzo escaped the blows aimed at himself, and, having time to draw his sword, was able to fight his way into the sacristy. Angelo Poliziano, who helped to save him by promptly closing the door, tells us that the noise and confusion was so great at the moment that it seemed as though the church itself were falling down.[1]

This conspiracy was certainly extraordinary in all its details; remarkable for the sagacity and daring of its plan; the moment chosen for its execution; the high rank of those engaged in it; and the number of victims slain, both at the time and afterwards. Most astonishing of all was the number and rank of the ecclesiastics implicated in the plot. The dagger that was to despatch Lorenzo de' Medici was entrusted to a priest; Archbishop Salviati was the leader of the conspiracy in Florence and Rome; and, according to public rumour, the Holy Father, Sixtus IV., himself was one of the hottest and most determined of its promoters. He had hoped to increase his nephews' power by this means, and infuriated by the failure of the plot, threw all other considerations to the winds and made open war upon the Florentines as their declared enemy.

It was in these times and amid these events that the

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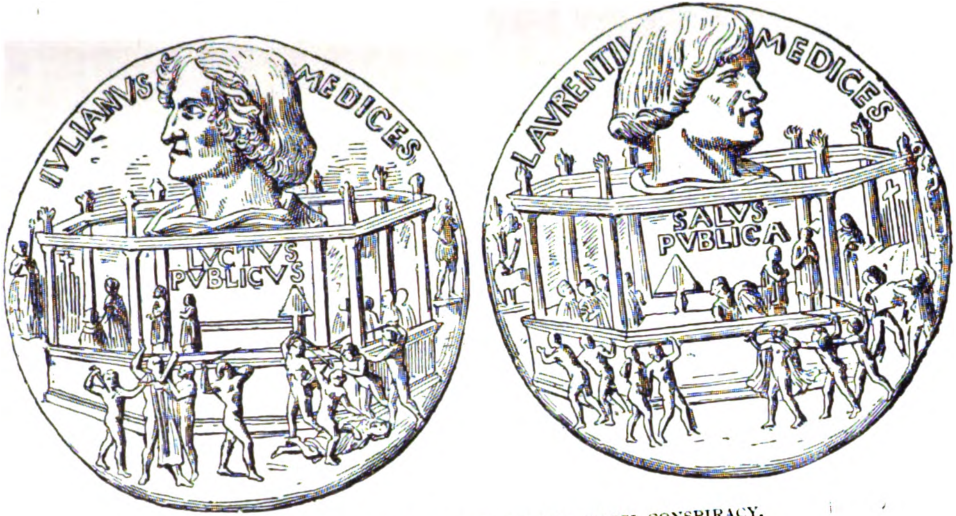
[1] A. Politiani, "De Pactiana conjuratione, Historia sive commentarium."


IVLIANVS MEDICES
LVCTVS PVBLICVS
LAVRENTII MEDICES
SALVS PVBLICA

MEDAL IN COMMEMORATION OF THE PAZZI CONSPIRACY.

mind of Savonarola grew into shape. The state of the world and the Church filled him with a horror-stricken grief, only to be relieved by prayer and study. Owing to the increasing esteem felt for him by his superiors, he was promoted from his office of instructor to that of preacher. He undertook the task with great ardour; for his original intention of remaining in silence and solitude was beginning to yield to an imperious need of moral and intellectual activity, and he therefore rejoiced to find a new field for his young and abounding energies.

In his first sermons he seems to have adopted the same style as in his lectures, although giving more space to practical remarks and moral precepts. Then, gradually discarding Aristotelian rules, he drew nearer and nearer to the Bible, which was soon to become his sole and inseparable guide. Nothing more is known of these sermons; and they cannot have had much success, since no writer of the time has mentioned them, nor has any record of them survived. We only know that a certain Giovanni Garzoni, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Bologna, reproved Savonarola for having abandoned the rhetorical rules he had taught him, and denied Priscian in favour of the Bible.[1]

In the year 1481 he was sent by his superiors to preach in Ferrara. He lived there as one dead to the world, seeing none of his acquaintances, and very little of his family, for fear of awaking his dormant affections. The streets, houses, and churches of his native town spoke to him of a past that he sought to banish from his mind. Apparently his fellow-citizens cared little for his preaching, since we afterwards hear him complain that he had proved the truth of the old saying: *Nemo propheta in*

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[1] "Cognovi te Prisciano grammatico bellum indixisse." Apparently Savonarola had at first sought the advice of this Professor Garzoni. *Vide* some of his letters in Gherardi's "Nuovi Documenti," &c., pp. 8–10.

patria sua.[1] In the absence of any report of these sermons it is impossible to ascertain why they made no effect upon their hearers. We may, however, conjecture that Savonarola adhered to his purpose of disregarding the example of other preachers who floundered in the mazes of scholastic sophistry, or indulged in a coarseness of speech such as, in our time, would barely be tolerated in the lowest public resorts.[2] Besides, Savonarola had not yet learnt to wield his own special gifts of oratory, and was too uncertain of himself to dominate his hearers and carry them with him by a new path. Nevertheless there must already have been flashes of power and eloquence in his speech, as, indeed, may be inferred from many anecdotes given by the biographers. One day, for instance, he was journeying up the Pò from Ferrara to Mantua by boat. There were eighteen soldiers on board who were noisily gambling and swearing without any respect for his monastic robe or position. Suddenly Savonarola addressed them in terms of indignation; and straightway eleven of the men fell on their knees before him and asked pardon for their sins.[3] But of course it is easier to impress a few ignorant troopers and persuade them to listen to the voice of conscience, than to preach a forcible sermon from the pulpit to a large congregation. In the first case natural eloquence is enough, and with that Savonarola was abundantly endowed; in the second, oratorical art is required, and in this he seems to have been as yet unversed.

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[1] Letter to his mother, from Pavia, dated the day of the Conversion of St. Paul, 1490. It was published by Father Marchese, in the "Archivio Storico Italiano," Appendix of vol. iii.: "Lettere e documenti inediti di Frà Girolamo Savonarola." The same complaint was frequently repeated in Savonarola's sermons.

[2] *Vide* Tiraboschi, "Storia Della Letteratura," concerning the sacred oratory of the fifteenth century. See also the sermons of Frà Paolo Attavanti, compared by Ficino with Orpheus, and those of Frà Roberto da Lecce, the most famous disciple of Frà Bernardino. The latter's style, however, was marked by a great simplicity, almost childish ingenuousness of which all traces had disappeared towards the close of the century. In the "Archivio Storico per le Provincie Napolitane" (1882, No. 1, pp. 140–165) there is a learned study on Frà Roberto da Lecce, by Professor F. Torraca. The author does not seem to me to have proved that the Friar had any oratorical power.

[3] Burlamacchi, p. 12; Pico, p. 150.

In the same year 1481, serious alarms of war were threatening Ferrara from all sides. Already many of the inhabitants had fled, and before long the University, in which the Dominicans taught theology, was closed. Thereupon, either from economy or as a measure of precaution, the Superior of the Order despatched the greater part of his monks elsewhere. Savonarola was directed to go to Florence. He thus bade a last farewell to his family, friends, and native town, for he was destined never to see them again.[1]

This war, solely directed, at first, against the Duke of Ferrara, gradually spread on all sides, until nearly the whole of Italy was split into two camps. The true motives of it were, on the one hand, the rising ambition of the Venetians to extend their power on the mainland; on the other, the covetous desire of the Pope to increase his nephew's dominions. These reasons, however, were kept concealed. The Pope pretended that he sought revenge on the Duke for having served under the Venetians when they were forced into war with him, after the failure of the Pazzi plot; while the Venetians found pretexts for hostility in certain frontier disputes and the usual quarrels concerning their salt trade. In vain, the Duke of Ferrara offered to yield on all these points: the two powers were now determined on war, and drew into it not only the

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[1] The early biographers all assign Savonarola's departure from Ferrara to the year 1481. In the first edition we adopted the date given by Father Marchese, of 1482, when the war really burst out. But it is most probable that tumults, anxieties, and preparations had gone on for some time before. To fix his departure in 1482 would necessitate the displacement of many other dates.

Genoese Republic, but a number of petty potentates in Romagna and the Marches. On the other hand, the Florentine Republic, the King of Naples, Duke of Milan, Marquis of Mantua, Bentivoglio, lord of Bologna and the powerful House of Colonna, all sided with the Duke of Ferrara. Thus the whole of Italy was in arms, and although the Florentines took only a verbal part in the contest, the rest of the allies were already in the field. The Duke of Calabria encountered the papal forces commanded by Roberto Malatesta; the Colonna issued from their strongholds and ravaged the Roman Campagna, while the Genoese attacked the western frontier of the Duchy of Milan. But the chief part in the campaign was played by the Venetians. Investing Ferrara with two of their armies, they marched a third against the Duke of Milan; and urged on hostilities with so much vigour that Ferrara was already reduced to famine and could hold out no longer. It was plainly evident that all the profits of the war would be reaped by the Venetians.

But directly Sixtus IV. realized that his coveted prey was about to escape him, he hastened, in the blindness of his fury, to change sides. Concluding a treaty with the Neapolitan king, he granted the Duke of Calabria free passage through his states; excommunicated the Venetians, whom he branded as foes of Christ, and incited all the powers of Italy to make war upon them. This sudden transformation was only amazing to those unacquainted with the impetuous nature of Sixtus IV., and the excesses he was prepared to commit in order to fill his treasury and widen his frontiers. And although the Venetians remained undismayed, the Pope's desertion changed the whole aspect of the campaign. The Duke of Calabria had already conveyed supplies to Ferrara and disturbed the progress of the siege: thus all decisive operations were again deferred. The hostile forces remained facing each other, without coming to open battle; the neighbouring country was continually ravaged; numbers died of hunger, none by the sword. The campaign dragged on in this incredibly feeble manner to the year 1482, when all wearied of a war that was equally hurtful to either side. Then the Venetian general accepted proposals of peace; all the combatants withdrew, and to the universal satisfaction hostilities were suddenly at an end.

The Pope, however, was implacable. He had never ceased to fan the blaze he had kindled, and could not resign himself to the loss of all he had hoped to obtain by the war. On the 12th of August, 1484, when the ambassadors appeared before him, and read the terms of the peace, he was wild with rage, and, starting to his feet, exclaimed, "The peace you announce is humiliating and shameful!" The following day his chronic malady, gout, flew to his chest, and thus the Holy Father died of grief because peace was concluded.[1]

This, then, was the war that drove Savonarola from Ferrara to Florence. In crossing the Apennines by lonely mountain paths, on his way to a new city, an unknown people, his mind was harassed with sad thoughts. That a Pope, for the sake of aggrandizing two or three dissolute youths, should throw all Italy in confusion, when the infidels were almost at her gates, and when less than two years had passed since the Turks' descent on Otranto! The wind whistling among the beeches and pines seemed almost to hurl maledictions against the wicked who were rending the robe of the Lord's spouse, and perhaps sounded like an echo to his own daring words:

"*Se romper si potria quelle grandi ali!*"
"Oh, that I might break those spreading wings!"

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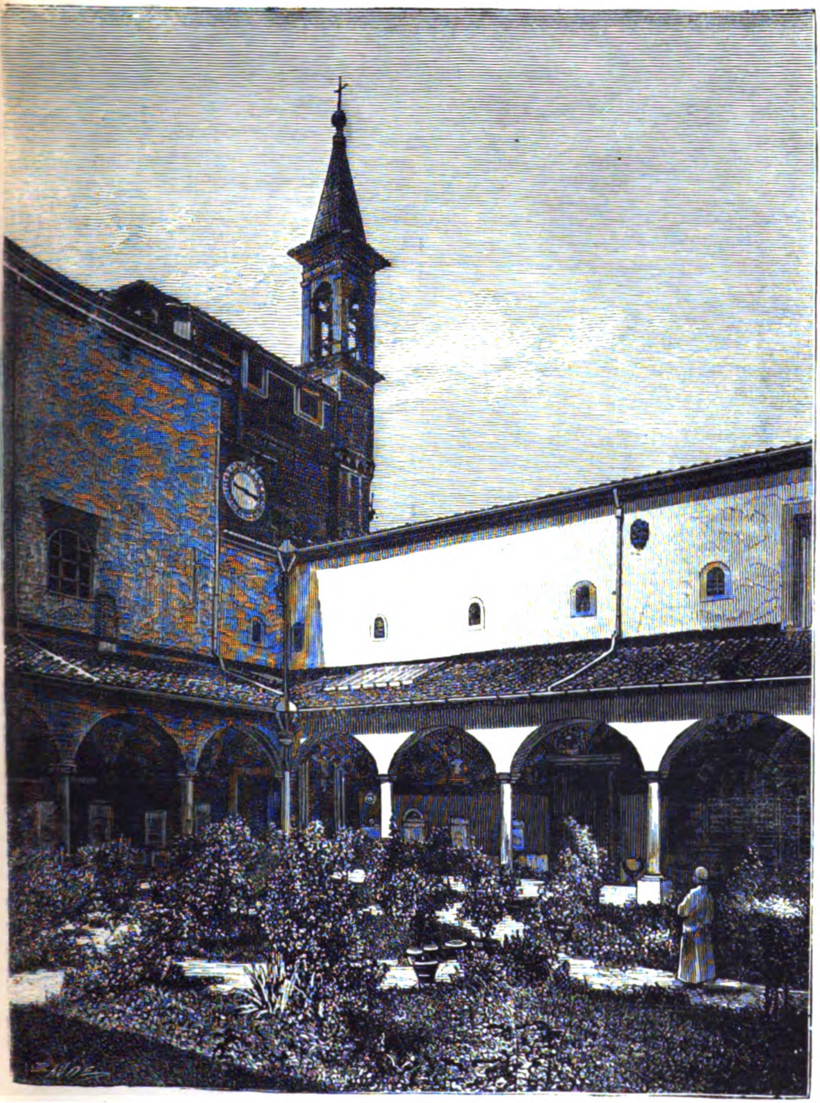
[1] "Sismondi," vol. vi. chap. 6; Leo, bk. v., § vii.; Steph. Infessurae, "Diarium," &c.

On this, his first arrival in Florence, in 1481, he entered the Monastery of St. Mark, where the brightest and also the saddest years of his life were to be passed. And inasmuch as the name of Savonarola is always associated with that of St. Mark, it will be well to say a few words on the convent's history.

At the beginning of the fifteenth century it was a poor, half-ruined building, inhabited by a few monks of the order of St. Sylvester, whose scandalous life occasioned numerous complaints to be laid before the Court of Rome. Finally, Cosimo the Elder obtained the papal permission to remove these monks elsewhere, and granted the house to the reformed Dominicans of the Lombard congregation. Then, deciding to rebuild it, he charged the celebrated architect, Michelozzo Michelozzi, with the work; and six years later, in 1443, the monastery was finished at a cost of 36,000 florins. Cosimo was never sparing of expense for churches, monasteries, and other public works fitted to spread the fame of his munificence and increase his popularity. While the convent was in course of erection, he had been very generous in helping the Dominicans, and now that the work was so successfully completed, he was not satisfied until he could endow them with a valuable library. This, however, was a difficult undertaking and one of considerable expense, since it was a question of collecting manuscripts, which, just then, commanded exorbitant prices. But the opportune decease of Niccolò Niccoli, the greatest manuscript collector in Europe, enabled Cosimo to fulfil his purpose. Niccoli had been one of the most learned men of his day, and spent his whole life and fortune in acquiring a store of codices that was the admiration of all Italy. He had bequeathed this treasure to Florence, but having also left many debts behind him, his testamentary dispositions had not been carried out. Accordingly Cosimo paid off the debts, and reserving a



ST. MARK'S CONVENT.

few of the more precious codices for himself, entrusted the rest of the collection to the Monastery of St. Mark. This was the first public library established in Italy, and the monks kept it in such excellent order as to prove themselves worthy of the charge. St. Mark's became almost a centre of erudition, and being joined to the congregation of the Lombard Dominicans, the more learned brothers of the Order resorted to Florence, and increased the new convent's renown. The most distinguished men of the time frequently came to St. Mark's to enjoy conversation with the friars. It was during these years that Frà Giovanni da Fiesole, better known as Frà Beato Angelico, was employed in covering the convent walls with his incomparable works. But above all their treasures of art and learning, the brethren chiefly gloried in their spiritual father and founder St. Antonine, one of those characters who are true glories of the human race.

History might be ransacked almost in vain for an example of more constant self-abnegation, active charity, and evangelical neighbourly love than that of St. Antonine. He was the founder or reviver of nearly every benevolent institution in Florence. His was the noble idea of converting to charitable uses the Society of the Bigallo, founded by St. Peter Martyr for the extermination of heretics, and that had so often stained the streets and walls of Florence with blood.[1] Thenceforward the Captains of the Bigallo, instead of burning and slaying their fellow-men, rescued and succoured forsaken orphans. St. Antonine was the founder of "St. Martin's Good Men" (Buoni Uomini di San Martino), a society that fulfils to this day the Christian work of collecting offerings for distribution among the *poveri vergognosi—i.e.*, the honest poor who are ashamed to beg. It would be quite impossible to relate all that he did for the public benefit; but, at the period of which we write, many were still living who remembered having often seen him going about the city and its environs, leading a donkey loaded with bread, clothing, &c., for sufferers from plague or pestilence. His death in 1459 was mourned in Florence as a public calamity; and when Savonarola came to St. Mark's in 1481, the memory of St. Antonine was still cherished with so lively a veneration, that the cloister still seemed to be pervaded by his spirit. None mentioned his name save in accents of the deepest respect; his sayings were continually recalled and carried the greatest weight, and when the friars sought to describe a model of Christian virtue, the only name that rose to their lips was that of St. Antonine.[1]

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[1] Previously styled "Captains of the Faith."

During his first days in Florence, Savonarola was accordingly half intoxicated with delight. He was charmed by the smiling landscape, the soft lines of the Tuscan hills, the elegance of the Tuscan speech. Even before reaching the town, the gentle manner of the countryfolk he met on the way had predisposed him to expect happiness in this fairest of Italian cities, where art and nature contend for the palm of beauty. To his deeply religious mind, Florentine art seemed the expression of a divine harmony, a proof of the omnipotence of genius when inspired by faith. The paintings of Frà Angelico appeared to have filled the cloisters of St. Mark with a company of angels; and as he gazed upon them, the Friar felt transported into a blessed sphere like unto the world of his dreams. The sacred memories of Antonine; the Saint's deeds of charity still enduring and still venerated by the brotherhood; the friars themselves so superior in culture and refinement to any that he had yet known—all combined to make him believe his lot cast among real brethren of the soul. His heart expanded with ingenuous hopes, he forgot all past disappointments, and did not anticipate the still sadder trials awaiting him when he should have been long enough in Florence to better understand the nature of its inhabitants.

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[1] Padre Vicenzo Marchese, "Storia di San Marco," bk. i. Florence: Le Monnier, 1855. This work, written with much elegance of style, care, and precision, contains many interesting particulars concerning St. Antonine as well as the convent. For still minuter details the reader may be referred to the "Summa Historialis," or "Chronicon" of the Saint, with additions by the Jesuit Father, Pietro Maturo, "Lugduni," &c., ap. "Junctas," 1585 and 1586, vol. iii.; Castiglioni, "Vita B. Antonini," Verona, 1740. For minuter details of the charitable institutions, *vide* Passerini, "Storia degli Istituti di beneficenza in Firenze," Florence, 1853. *Vide* also Richa, "Notizie storiche delle Chiese di Firenze;" "Annales Conventus S. Marci," Cod. 112 of the Library of St. Mark, Florence, now comprised in the Laurentian Library; Fabroni, "Vita Magni Cosmi Medicei."

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CHAPTER III.

LORENZO THE MAGNIFICENT,[1] AND THE FLORENTINES OF HIS DAY.

AT the time of Savonarola's coming, Lorenzo the Magnificent had reigned in Florence for many years, and was then at the height of his power and fame. Under his rule all things wore an air of prosperity and well-being. The factions which had so frequently distracted the city had long been extinguished; all refusing to bend beneath the

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[1] He was born in 1448, and ruled from 1469 to 1492. It is unnecessary to fill this chapter with quotations. The historians of Lorenzo di Medici are so well known that it would be superfluous to repeat their names. We need only say that Roscoe's "Life of Lorenzo de' Medici" is by no means an infallible guide. It is safer to refer to Fabroni ("Vita Laurentii Medicis Magnifici"), from whom Roscoe has borrowed wholesale both in the text and appendix of his book. But Lorenzo may be studied to most profit in his own writings: "Poesie di Lorenzo de' Medici," Florence, 1825, four vols. in quarto; "Canti Carnascialeschi," Florentine edition of 1750; in his letters, many of which are still unpublished; and also in numerous works by contemporaries who wrote freely upon him, and with no intention of courting his favour. Guicciardini's "Opere Inedite," recently published by the Counts Guicciardini, with annotations by Giuseppe Canestrini, also throws much light on the lives of Cosimo and Lorenzo. Particular reference may be made to the dialogue on the "Reggimento di Firenze" in vol. ii., and on the "Storia Fiorentina" in vol. iii. of the "Opere." Some of the "Discorsi" of Jacopo Nardi also serve to confirm our views of the Medicean rule. Long after the first appearance of our book, Baron von Reumont published his work on "Lorenzo de' Medici," two vols., Leipsic, 1875, which ran to a second edition in 1883.

Medicean yoke were either imprisoned, exiled, or dead; and general tranquillity reigned. Continually occupied with festivities, dances, and tournaments, the Florentines, once so jealous of their rights, seemed now to have forgotten the very name of freedom.

Lorenzo took an active part in all these diversions, and was perpetually seeking out or originating others. His most famous invention was that of the "Canti Carnascialeschi." These were ballads of his own composition, to be sung in carnival masquerades of the triumph of death, troops of devils, or other whimsicalities of the same kind. The performers were the young nobles of Florence, who paraded the streets in disguises suited to their parts. Perusal of these songs brings the corruption of the time far more clearly before us than could any description. Nowadays they would excite the disgust not merely of cultured aristocrats, but of the lowest rabble; and to sing them in the streets would be an offence against public decorum not to be committed with impunity. Then, on the contrary, their composition was the favourite pastime of a ruler praised by the whole world, held up as a model to all other sovereigns, and proclaimed a prodigy of wisdom and of literary and political genius.

Such was the general opinion on Lorenzo in his own day, and even now many concur in the verdict. They are willing to pardon the bloodshed by which he maintained the power usurped by himself and his kin; the disorders he wrought in the Republic; his embezzlement of the funds of the State for his private extravagance;[1] the shameless profligacy, to which, despite his weak health, he was completely abandoned; and even his diabolical method of corrupting the popular mind by every means in his power! And all these sins are to be condoned in virtue of his patronage of letters and art!

[1] *Vide* Machiavelli, "Istorie Fiorentine."

The social conditions of Florence in Lorenzo's day bristled with sharp contrasts. Culture was generally diffused; every one knew Latin and Greek; every one admired the classics; many women were accomplished writers of Greek and Latin verse. Painting and the other fine arts, which had declined since Giotto's day, were now awakened to new life; stately churches, palaces, and elegant buildings were rising on all sides. But artists, men of letters, statesmen, nobles, and people, were all equally corrupt in mind, devoid of public or private virtue, devoid of all moral sense. Their religion was either an engine of government or a base hypocrisy: they were without faith of any kind, whether civil or religious, moral or philosophical; they were not earnest even in scepticism. Their dominant feeling was utter indifference to principle. These clever, keen-witted, intellectual men were incapable of real elevation of thought, and, despising all enthusiasm for noble and generous ideas, showed their contempt by coldly compassionate smiles. Unlike the sceptic philosophers, they neither combated nor threw doubt on such ideas; they simply regarded them with pity. And this *vis inertiæ* was more hurtful to virtue than a declared and active hostility. It was only in country places and among the lowest classes removed from all contact with politics and letters, that any germ of the old virtues was still to be found. And even this was not visible on the surface.

This state of morals could not fail to have a powerful effect upon mental culture. In fact, philosophy had shrunk to mere erudition; scholastic lore—which, although so much derided, possessed a youthful spirit and energy absent from fifteenth-century writings—had also decayed. Literature consisted of learned essays or of imitations of Virgil, Cicero, Homer, Pindar, and so on. Even at the time of Boccaccio's death, Franco Sacchetti mourned the decay of literature in his pure and simple verses. What chiefly afflicted him was not, he said, the loss of the great dead; but the hopelessness of seeing their like again, the lack of souls able, at least, to comprehend them.[1] Had he lived in the times of which we write, he would have had still graver cause for lament; he would have heard the Italian tongue declared unsuited to the utterance of lofty ideas; and Dante's "Divina Commedia" pronounced inferior to the "Ballate" and "Canti Carnascialeschi"[2] of Lorenzo de' Medici! Even the fine arts, necessarily the last to suffer from the nation's moral and political calamities, were no longer inspired by the daring and all-embracing conceptions with which Giotto, Orcagna, and so many of their compeers had adorned Italian buildings. Most assuredly this age could have produced no edifice infused with the spirit of freedom discernible in Arnolfo's Cathedral and the Palazzo Vecchio.

Nevertheless, although causing so many ills, the loss of liberty had been of positive advantage to literature and the fine arts. All ways being barred to political action and ambition, to the exercise of any public virtue, and in the decline of all those branches of trade and commerce in which such enormous fortunes had been reaped, what active energy still survived was applied to artistic and literary ends. And although there were now no men of transcendent genius equal to those who had flourished during the Republic, there was a general atmosphere of intellectual activity, a general yearning for the study of new languages, the production of new books and pictures. This yearning was all the stronger because students were ignorant how to make their knowledge available for loftier aims. In fact the city bore the air of a vast school; there was a general craze for the collection of manuscripts and ancient statuary, and the only subjects discussed were points of grammar, philology, or erudition. The Greek sages, driven by the fall of Constantinople to seek refuge in the West, were enthusiastically welcomed in Florence, and their doctrines and teaching gave additional impetus to the rage for antiquity and the desire to visit Greece and ransack its soil, monasteries, and temples in search of old remains. Journeys to the East were undertaken by travellers willing to face all discomforts and dangers and expend considerable fortunes for the sake of acquiring literary treasures of more or less value. Some of these expeditions have been recorded in history. We know the successful researches made by Poggio Bracciolini in almost all the cities of Europe; the eastern travels of Guarino of Verona, whose hair suddenly turned white, it was said, from grief at the loss by shipwreck of the treasures of learning he had laboured so hard to collect; the wanderings of Giovanni Aurispa, who, returning to Venice with more than two hundred manuscripts, which had cost him his whole fortune, found himself in extreme old age as rich in fame as he was poor in substance. We also know the travels of Francesco Filelfo and of many other visitors to the classic land of Greece. Throughout Italy, and especially in Florence, the return of one of these pilgrims was an occasion of public festivity and triumph. The leading men of the place went forth to meet him; the ruler of the city gave him a most honourable reception; laudatory reports of his discoveries were drawn up, and private letters were filled with the same theme. Then came discussions on the authenticity and interpretation of the manuscripts; there were hot disputes on philological or grammatical details, and the strife overleaping the limits of debate, these learned scholars tore one another to pieces in violent onslaughts on their respective honour and reputation. Liberty to quarrel in this fashion was in fact the only freedom retained by the Florentines, although nominally their government was still a republic, and their gentle-mannered tyrant a mere private citizen.

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[1] Franco Sacchetti, "Opere," Canzoni IV., in the "Lirici Italiani." Florence, 1839.

[2] The famous Pico della Mirandola was one of those maintaining this view.

The fine arts fared better, although their practitioners indulged more freely than any other class in the frivolous enjoyments of the time, revelling and working with equal absence of care. In those days of universal art-patronage, painters and sculptors were everywhere welcome guests, and throughout Italy all rich men and nobles, all churches and convents, demanded their works. Thus their lives were pleasantly divided between work and amusement, and while forsaking their former lofty ideals, they made infinite advance in truthful representation of nature, delicacy of expression, and management of colour. It was then, too, that the discovery of oil-painting marked a new period in the history of art. Sculpture and architecture, in which, unlike painting, so much depends on the materials employed, also made great progress, partly by the influence of classic remains, partly through the numerous difficulties which practice taught them to overcome. The names of Donatello, Ghiberti, Brunelleschi and many others have won immortality. Certainly at that period the arts attained an unprecedented elegance and refinement of execution that was destined to perish in the succeeding century.

Nevertheless most of the facts we have just related had their origin before the power of the Medici was established, and consequently owed nothing to the latter's aid. The rage for classical studies had begun to spread even in Petrarch's and Boccaccio's time, had gone on increasing ever since, and private citizens had willingly consumed their substance in the travels and researches mentioned above, content to reap glory as their sole reward. As to the artists, the majority of them flourished at the beginning of the century; thus, Brunelleschi was born in 1379, and died in 1446; Ghiberti, 1378–1455; Donatello, 1386–1466; Masaccio 1402–1428: and their noblest works were produced without either the patronage or advice of the Medici.[1] The construction of the cupola afterwards executed by Brunelleschi, had been already decided upon in 1407 by the Cathedral workmen, and the Medici had nothing to do with its completion. Ghiberti began his bronze doors in 1403, at the instance of the Merchants or Calimala Guild, and received for the first of them the, then, enormous price of 22,000 florins. The frescoes by Masaccio and other famous artists in the Carmine chapel were executed at the expense of private individuals; and Beato Angelico, whose paintings were entirely inspired by love of art and religious enthusiasm, frequently refused all payment for his work.

The Medici therefore cannot be said to have created a state of things that, indeed, no human power could have called into existence. It was the necessary outcome of the vicissitudes of the Republic during many centuries, of the national culture, and of the general decay of freedom then going on throughout the whole of Italy. The Medici found it already in existence and fostered by the citizens at large; but they had the rare sagacity to make use of it and turn it, by their favour, to their own profit. And certainly Lorenzo de' Medici was the man of all others best adapted for the purpose. Gifted by nature with a brilliant intellect, he had inherited from Cosimo a subtle astuteness, rendering him,—although by no means a statesman of the first order,—very swift of resource, full of prudence and acumen, dexterous in his negotiations with other powers, still more dexterous in ridding himself of his enemies, and equally capable of daring and cruelty whenever emergencies

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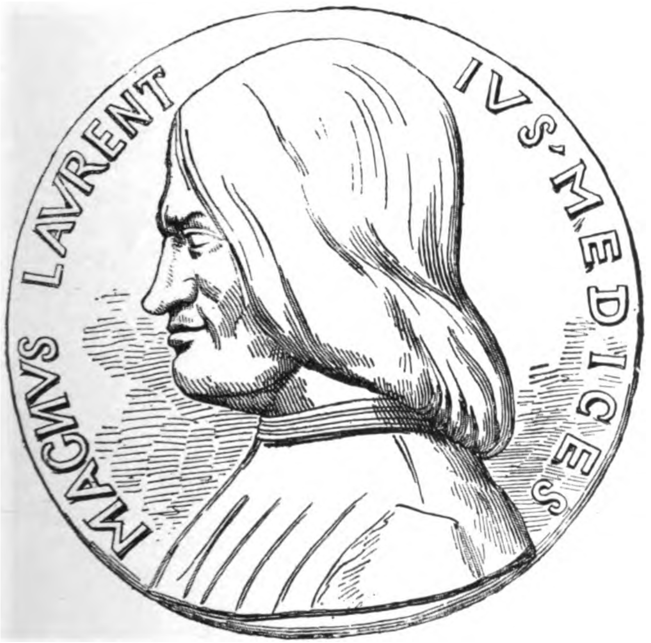
[1] Cosimo returned from exile in 1434; Lorenzo, as we have already noted, began his rule in 1469.


MAGNVS LAVRENT IVS MEDICES

LORENZO THE MAGNIFICENT.

called for bold strokes. He was alike regardless of honesty and honour; respected no condition of men; went straight to his ends, trampling over all considerations, whether human or Divine. The cruel sack of unfortunate Volterra; the robbery of the funds of the Monte delle Fanciulle,[1] in consequence of which many dowerless girls fell into bad courses; and his rapacious appropriation of public property, are all stains that even his blindest worshippers are unable to ignore.[2] His countenance was a true index to his character. It was a dark-skinned, sinister, unpleasing face, with a flattened, irregular nose, and a wide, thin-lipped, crooked mouth, suited to the accents of his nasal voice. But his eyes were lively and penetrating, his forehead lofty, and his manners marked by the most perfect finish of that cultured and elegant age; his conversation was full of vivacity, wit, and learning; and he won the genuine affection of all who were admitted to his intimacy. He encouraged all the worst tendencies of the age, and multiplied its corruptions. Abandoned to pleasure himself, he urged the people to lower depths of abandonment, in order to plunge them in the lethargy of intoxication. In fact, during his reign Florence was a continuous scene of revelry and dissipation. It is true, that in the midst of this corrupt, pleasure-loving society, a mighty transformation of the human mind was already in progress. But it seemed to grow spontaneously by the natural force of things, uncared for and unnoticed. What was most visible at the time was the general passion for pleasure, the pride of pagan learning, the increasingly sensual turn, both of art and literature, under the fostering hand of the man who was master of all in Florence.

Lorenzo had a genuine poetic gift and a fine taste for art. Leaving the commercial business of his House to fall to ruin by his neglect, he devoted his leisure to the literary studies in which he had been trained by the most learned men of the time. He had learnt the art of poetry from Landino, had studied the Aristotelian philosophy with Argiropulus, and the Platonic system under Ficino. Even as a child he had given proofs of intellectual gifts worthy of dedication to the Muses: great quickness of comprehension, singular accuracy of expression, and a very lively fancy. Afterwards, as the patron of scholars and artists, his mansion became the resort of the finest minds of the day. All literary men of any note in Florence gathered round Lorenzo; many came from other parts of Italy in order to join his distinguished circle. And both at the meetings held in his own house and those of the renowned Platonic Academy, his genius shone amidst this chosen band, while his literary culture gained no little nourishment from their intercourse.

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[1] A charitable institution for providing respectable girls with marriage portions.

[2] *Vide* Guicciardini, "Del Reggimento di Firenze e Storia Fiorentina," in the "Opere Inedite."

Accordingly, contemporary writers were eloquent in their praise of Lorenzo, and some of the works they lauded to the skies are still held in admiration. All his poems in the vulgar tongue, and particularly his fable of "Ambra," have a freedom of movement, a spontaneous grace, and an observant feeling for nature by no means common in his time. For although his verse is too frequently imitated from Poliziano's "Ottave," it is impossible to deny that he was possessed of rare intellectual endowments. He was the typical man of his age—all his qualities were confined to his intellect; his courteous manners were the result of mental refinement, not of kindness of heart; his patronage of the learned was born of his passion for culture, and also because he found it a pleasant pastime, and one useful to his influence as a ruler.

Lorenzo's life was strangely complex! After hours of strenuous labour over some new law framed to crush any lingering remains of liberty, or after passing some new decree of confiscation or sentence of death,[1] he would repair to the Platonic Academy and take part in heated discussions on virtue and the immortality of the soul; then go about the town to sing his "Canti Carnascialeschi" in the company of dissolute youths and indulge in the lowest debauchery. After this he would return home, receive Pulci and Poliziano at his table, and vie with them in reciting verses and discoursing on the poetic art. And whatever was the occupation of the moment, he threw himself into it as heartily as though it were the sole purpose of his life. Strangest of all, in no aspects of this multiform life do we find a single instance of genuine kindness either towards his people, his intimates, or his kindred. Had he performed any good deed, his indefatigable flatterers would certainly not have failed to record it. This is not only a proof of his depravity, but of the still worse depravity of the times; for had justice and virtue been then rightly valued, Lorenzo would certainly have assumed their championship—at least in appearance.

Among Lorenzo's constant companions were two men of European reputation, and whose names have come down to posterity. One of these was Angelo Poliziano, the most learned man of letters of that learned age, and almost the only writer of his time with a vein of true poetry in his soul. He began a translation of Homer's "Iliad" when only fifteen years of age, and at eighteen composed Greek epigrams and a Latin elegy of incomparable beauty on the death of Albiera degli Albizzi. He was little more than twenty-one years old when his magnificent octaves on the "Tournament" of Giuliano de'

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[1] Sismondi gives a list of the numerous citizens—chiefly nobles—put to death by Lorenzo for political reasons. See also the marvellous portrait of Lorenzo given by Guicciardini in his "Storia Fiorentina" and his remarks on the Medici at p. 43 and fol. of his "Del Reggimento di Firenze."

Medici established his fame as the first poet of the age and his right to immortality. Winning Lorenzo's favour by these works, he was appointed his private secretary, librarian, and preceptor to his children, and became a permanent member of his household. But in these new and luxurious conditions the sacred fire of poetry gradually waned, although his store of erudition waxed greater and greater until it was truly prodigious. Lorenzo naturally derived much benefit from the service and conversation of a man of such vast acquirements, but Poliziano's position was injurious to his fame. The pertinacity with which later ages have insulted his memory by accusations of unmentionable vice, is probably to be attributed to his excessive intimacy with Lorenzo, whom he sincerely loved and admired.

The prince's other intimate was Messer Luigi Pulci, a youth of noble birth and the brother of two poets whose renown has been almost eclipsed by the superior merit of his own poem the "Morgante Maggiore," a spirited, graceful medley of strange and sparkling fancies, in which an invocation to the Virgin is followed by another to Venus, and this again by a satire on the immortality of the soul. And as the poem, so was the man. He was the most fantastic and light-hearted of mortals: a sceptic brimming over with irony; a lover of pleasure and sensual excess; devoted body and soul to Lorenzo, and a sharer in his midnight revels and in all lawful and unlawful amusements. His work was composed at the instance of Lucrezia Tornabuoni, the mother of Lorenzo, and he recited it at the Medici table, where wine flowed as freely as verse.

Besides the company of his friends, Lorenzo also gave much time to the society of artists, taking part in their pleasures and showing a singular interest in their strange adventures and characteristics. He was not able to patronize them so efficiently as Cosimo, who had lavished treasures on the building and decoration of churches and palaces; but he always welcomed them with smiles, and helped and encouraged them by every means at the command of so powerful a prince. Had he done nothing else for the arts, the founding of the garden of St. Mark was in itself a most praiseworthy act. This enclosure contained all the ancient statues and fragments of sculpture he had been able to collect, together with the designs of the best masters, and he opened its gates to all students of any promise. Here Michelangiolo Buonarotti, then a poor and almost unknown youth, made his first essays with the chisel and enjoyed the hospitality that forms one of Lorenzo's best titles of merit.[1]

As yet we have made no mention of the man who, more than all the rest, may be designated as a creature of the Medici. This was Marsilio Ficino, the friend and instructor of Lorenzo, and head of the famous Platonic Academy, whose doctrines were then universally diffused, and modified, to some extent, even those of Savonarola. Of this Academy and its founder we shall speak at length in the ensuing chapter.

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[1] *Apropos* to this, we may quote an English book: "The Life of Michael Angelo Buonarotti, also Memoirs of Savonarola, Raphael, and Vittoria Colonna," by John S. Harford, 2 vols. London, 1857. This work contains many particulars of Savonarola's times; but although the author professes different political views from those of Roscoe, he adopts the latter's literary judgments, which are often exaggerated and occasionally false. Since the first edition of our biography, many valuable works on Michelangiolo have appeared. We need only quote that of Springer, "Raffael und Michelangiolo." Leipzig: Seemann, 1877-78.

CHAPTER IV.

MARSILIO FICINO AND THE PLATONIC ACADEMY.

THE Council held at Florence in 1439, to promote the union of the Greek and Latin Churches, while rendering no service to religion proved very beneficial to letters. For the representative of the Eastern Church, the Emperor John Paleologus, arrived from Constantinople with many profoundly learned men in his train. These scholars, speaking the tongue of Plato and Aristotle, at that time so generally studied and admired, were accordingly welcomed everywhere with enthusiasm and treated with a respect almost amounting to worship.

Giorgio Scolari[1] and Bessarion, afterwards a convert to Catholicism and ultimately a cardinal, were included in the band, but the most renowned of all the number was Gemistos Pletho, who, although somewhat unjustly neglected by posterity, was then esteemed the first of Greek philosophers. He might have been a contemporary of the sages of old, for so admirable were his writings that it was difficult for the best philologists to distinguish them from those of the brightest period of Grecian literature.[1] It was in token of reverence for Plato and profound knowledge of his doctrines that he assumed the name of Georgios Gemistos Pletho. So great, indeed, was his passion for antiquity, that, in his frequent discourses on the approach of a religious reform when a single preacher would teach a single doctrine to the whole world and all differences of creed be swept away, it was easy to see by his words that he hoped for the restoration of the Pagan religion, though with certain modifications in accordance with his own Neo-Platonic beliefs. His principal work "On Laws," in which these ideas were enounced, was burnt by his enemies, after his death, and only a few fragments of it survive.[2] Here, as in all his other writings, the religious hopes of Gemistos are very clearly expressed. Yet—such were the times—he was chosen to represent the interests of the Greek Church, and willingly accepted the charge, believing this Church to be less hostile than the Catholic to his special ideas which were already finding favour in Greece. And even in Italy he was cordially welcomed. The gravity of his manners, his vast learning and advanced age, the elegance of his writings and his almost Platonic diction, endued him with an authority that none could contest. But his Platonic convictions must have reaped little satisfaction in Florence, where at that time men read Aristotle and Plato with equal avidity, without noting, almost without perceiving, any difference between the two. After having so long studied the Aristotelian philosophy with the help of its Arabian commentators, the Italians of the fifteenth century at last possessed the original works both of Aristotle and Plato. But, as yet, they passed from one to the other without making any distinction between them. Learned students were then wholly absorbed in struggling with the difficulties of the language and its interpretation; all discussion turned upon points of grammar or philology; and philosophic learning had not yet come into existence. But it was about to arise, and could not fail to turn in favour of Plato, on account of the greater ease with which his doctrines could be brought into harmony with the Christian creed.[1]

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[1] Also known as Gennadius.

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[1] On this point there can be no better judge than Giacomo Leopardi, who, in his "Discorso in proposito di una orazione Greca di G. G. Pletone, e traduzioni della medesima" ("Opere," vol. ii. p. 335. Florence: Le Monnier, 1865), deplores the oblivion into which this author has fallen, adding that his writings are dictated "with such abundance and weight of authority, with so much sobriety, power, and elevation of style, purity and refinement of language, that the reader is tempted to pronounce Gemistos the equal, in all save antiquity, of the great Grecian writers of old. And this was the verdict of the learned of his own land in his own age."

[2] Plèthon, "Traité des Lois ou recueil des fragments, en partie inédits, de cet ouvrage." Paris: Didot, 1858. The Greek text was collected by A. Alexandre, translated by A. Pellisier. See also F. Schultze, "Geschichte der Philosophie der Renaissance," vol. i. Jena, 1874. This volume—the only one, we believe, as yet published—is entirely devoted to Gemistos Pletho.

It was Gemistos who suddenly started the question in the field of philosophy by his pamphlet "De Platonicæ atque Aristoteliæ philosophiæ differentia."[2] Here, after marshalling the respective claims of the two philosophers with much keenness and penetration, he decided all points in favour of Plato. This caused a mighty quarrel among the Greeks, in which the Italians took part; and thus arose the two parties of Aristotelians and Platonists who disputed with a fierceness that is well-nigh incredible at the present day. Giorgio Scolari and Teodoro Gaza, both Greeks of the Aristotelian camp, were the first to contradict Gemistos, the one with irony, the other with violence.

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[1] Tiraboschi, "Storia della Letteratura"; Bruckeri, "Historia Philosophiæ." Leipzig, 1743.

[2] Basileæ, 1574. There is a copy of it in the Marucellian Library of Florence.

Thereupon Bessarion, their adversary's disciple, took up the pen, defending his master in an anonymous letter, in which he sought to reduce the dispute to a more peaceful footing. But, unfortunately, he let it be known that he considered Teodoro Gaza superior in learning to Trapezuntios,[1] another Greek, then in Florence. The latter was a violent, presumptuous man, rough-mannered, and exceedingly touchy. He immediately took up the gauntlet with a fierceness that was surprising to all. In spite of being an Aristotelian, he assailed both camps with equal violence; styled them *non philosophos sed philotenebras*, and added all sorts of scurrilous abuse; and then, not content with outraging the living, finally heaped insults on the dead.[2] According to him, Plato had been addicted to every vice—to gluttony, lust, and all kinds of excesses; was devoid of truth, dignity, or sense of honour, and so on. This unseemly, indecent, and untruthful language naturally roused the disgust of honest men, and Trapezuntios found himself censured and forsaken by all. But this had no effect upon him; and, persisting in the same course, he passed his closing years in an unhappiness that roused compassion in none.

Meanwhile Bessarion had been engaged on a great work, entitled "In Calumniatorem Platonis,"[3] and brought it out when the strife was at the hottest. After triumphantly vindicating the great philosopher's good fame, he proceeded to show that the divergences between his doctrines and those of Aristotle, were neither so wide nor so deep as many had sought to prove.[1] The Hellenic Aristotle,[2] he concluded, might and could be brought into accord with Plato: this had been accomplished by the Alexandrians, therefore might also be accomplished by the Italians of the fifteenth century. Thus the discussion was resumed on a more orderly and courteous basis; and the philosophy always known as the Platonic—although in reality Neo-Platonic or Alexandrian—finally triumphed in Florence. The tradition of it had always been kept alive in Greece, and was now transplanted to Italy by its latest supporters.

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[1] Likewise known by the name of George of Trebizonde, the birthplace of his parents. He was a native of Crete.

[2] "Comparationes philosophorum Aristotelis et Platonis." Venetiis, 1523.

[3] He brought out two treatises, one of which ("De Natura et arte adversus Georgium Trapezuntium cretensem") recounted the whole history of the quarrel; while the other ("In Calumniatorem Platonis") treated at length the philosophic part of the question. In the folio edition of this work (Venetiis: in ædibus Aldi et Andreæ Soceri, MDXVI.) the first treatise is added to the second and incorporated in the same book.

But the most noteworthy fact in this philosophic strife was the point on which the whole dispute hinged. Gemistos maintained that both Plato and Aristotle are agreed that the operations of Nature have a definite aim; but, whereas Plato insists that Nature works with a purpose (*consulto agit*)—*i.e.*, that there is a spirit or *essence* in Nature conscious of the aim she has in view—Aristotle compares Nature to a labourer, who, having once learnt his trade, continues to work mechanically (*non consulto*), though always for a definite end. And according to Gemistos, the great superiority of the Platonic idea consisted in this: that Nature being the art of God, is vastly superior to the art of man; in Nature the hand and spirit of God are ever present, and although man may sometimes act by habit, God always acts by supreme reason alone. The question, however drily and confusedly expressed, was one of the deepest gravity. It sought to decide whether Nature works by reason or by chance; whether, in short, Nature be the manifestation of the Divine and universal spirit, informing and ruling the world, or merely the blind effect of the laws of matter. That Gemistos Pletho, in the fifteenth century, should not only have been able to suddenly transport Italian scholarship into the field of philosophy, but also to concentrate it upon a question of vital importance, proved him to be possessed of great philosophic insight. Nor was it less remarkable that his learned contemporaries should have so quickly appreciated the importance of the question and contested its grounds with so much zeal.[1]

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[1] For information concerning Bessarion, the reader may refer to Henri Vast, "Le Cardinal Bessarion" (1403–1472); "Etude sur la Chrétienté et la Renaissance." Paris: Hachette, 1878.

[2] Aristotle in the original Greek was always so called, in contradistinction to the versions of the commentators and bad translations.

When Gemistos witnessed the ardour, tempered by sobriety, with which Bessarion and his former pupil in Greece championed the Platonic ideas, and saw that these were triumphing in Florence, he entirely withdrew from the discussion and sought some more effective way of diffusing and making them permanent. Having a singular gift of inspiring others with his own reverence for Plato, he accordingly sought the acquaintance of Cosimo de' Medici, plied him with many arguments, gained his attention, and finally succeeded in rousing the enthusiasm of that powerful ruler. Then, when he saw that he had kindled a passion for the new ideas, he went a step farther and communicated to Cosimo his cherished plan of establishing in Florence a revival of the ancient Academy that had won so much glory for Greece and been of so much service in the propagation of the Platonic method. Cosimo was enchanted with the plan, took it up warmly and set to work to carry it into effect. Such was the origin of the famous Platonic Academy that throughout the century had so much influence on the progress of philosophy.[2]

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[1] Gemisti Pletonis, "De Platonicæ atque Aristoteliæ philosophiæ differentia"; Bessarionis, "In Calumniatorem Platonis"; Trapezuntii, "Comparationes philosophorum Aristotelis et Platonis."

[2] The origin of this Academy is narrated by Ficino in the dedicatory letter affixed to his Latin translation of Plotinus. *Vide* Ficini, "Opera." Basileæ, 1576. Two vols. in folio.

The triumph of his doctrines being thus assured, Gemistos returned to Peloponnesus in order to pass his few remaining years in tranquillity. But his enemies gave him no peace, and forced him to continue the strife; for the same Scolarius who had been among the first to oppose him in Florence, and was now made Patriarch of Constantinople, carried on the warfare more fiercely than ever. With the zeal of a fanatic, he harassed Gemistos, during his life, by charges of heresy and unbelief; after the philosopher's death, tried to blacken his fame in every way, and finally cast into the flames his manuscript work "On Laws," which was thus irretrievably lost to the world. Nevertheless the name of Gemistos Pletho was greatly renowned in Italy, and so much love and veneration felt for him personally, that in 1465, fifteen years after his death, Sigismund Malatesta carried off his remains during the war in Morea, and brought them to Rimini as sacred relics. They lie buried in that city in a marble sarcophagus, inscribed to the memory of the "Prince of philosophers and learned men,"[1] outside the church of San Francesco, that, thanks to the gold of Malatesta and the genius of Leon Battista Alberti, is one of the noblest gems of the Italian Renaissance.

At that time Savonarola had not yet completed his fourteenth year. But what must he have thought on hearing of the funeral honours paid, at the gates of a church dedicated to St. Francis, to one who had hoped in the revival of Paganism? What, too, must he have felt on learning that the most splendid chapel in the church itself enshrined the monument (Divæ Isottæ Sacrum) erected to her who, before being the wife, was long the

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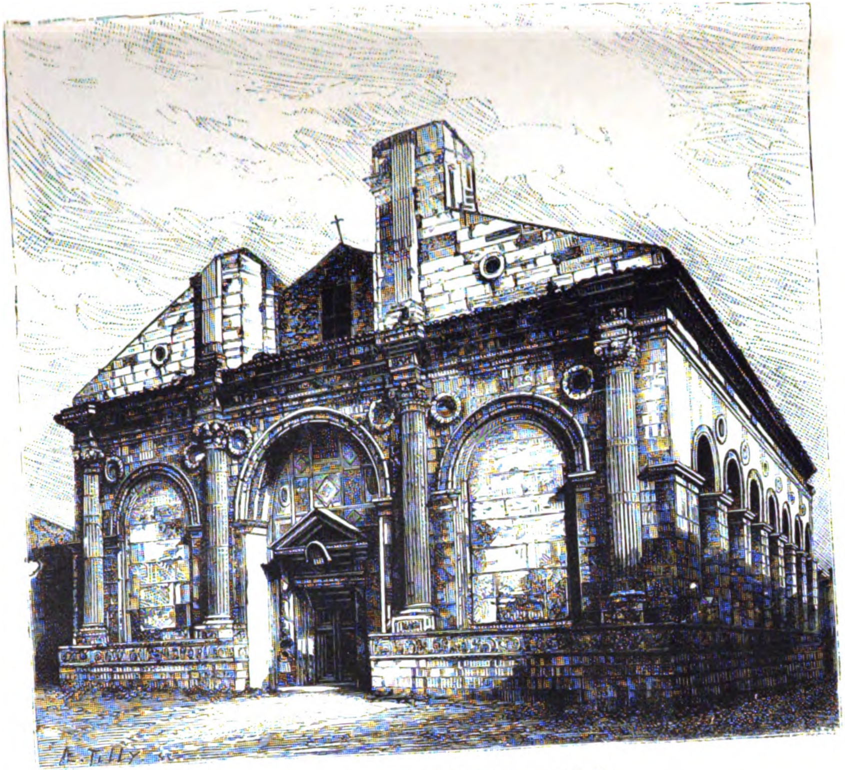
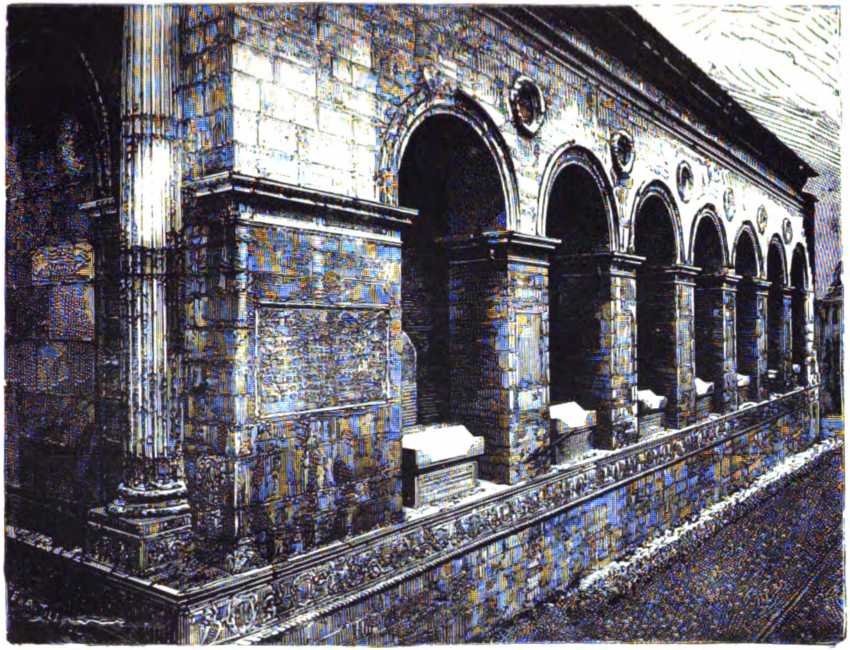
[1] "Temisthii Bizantii, philosophor (um) sua temp. (estate) principis reliquum Sig. (ismundus) Pan. (dulfus) Mal. (atesta) Pan. (dulfi) F. (ilius) belli Pelop. (onnesiaci) adversus. Turcor. (um) regem. Imp. (erator) ob. ingentem. eruditorum. quo flagrat. amorem. huc. offerendum. introque, mittendum. curavit. MCCCCLXV."

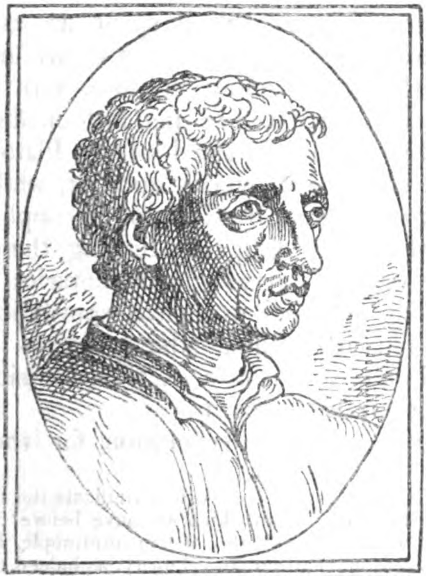


CHURCH OF SAN FRANCESCO, RIMINI.



TOMB OF GEMISTOS PLETHO, RIMINI.

concubine of that bloodthirsty, sacrilegious adulterer, Sigismondo Malatesta? The whole temple, indeed, would seem to be dedicated to him, to his Isotta, and the deity of the Gentiles, rather than to the Virgin or the God of the Christians. This was certainly in accordance with the Renaissance spirit, and the elegant architecture of the building was deemed all the more worthy of praise. But although the world might laud the name of the blood-stained, sceptical Mæcenas, whom a passion for ancient art had urged to this profanation of a Christian church, these were the views, these the men, whereby the fire of Savonarola's wrath was kindled.


LEON BATTISTA ALBERTI.

But to return to Gemistos. It is an undoubted fact that, owing to the decline of Greek studies among us, his name has been unjustly consigned to oblivion. All students of the history of his times will recognize him as the first to introduce the Platonic philosophy in Italy, and consequently not only justifying the esteem of his contemporaries, but deserving of honour as one of the greatest benefactors of Italian culture.[1]

No sooner had Gemistos left Florence, than Cosimo perceived that the Platonic Academy could not possibly flourish without some ruling spirit at its head. He therefore fixed upon the son of his own medical attendant, a youth of marvellous promise, born in 1433, and named Marsilio Ficino. In his ardour for knowledge, the young Ficino had already devoured Plato's philosophy, and written voluminous works upon it, while still in his teens.[2] Now, spurred by Cosimo, he applied himself to the study of Greek, diligently reading the great philosopher in the original, making commentaries on his works, and preparing for their complete translation. And to this day, notwithstanding the progress achieved in Hellenic philology, Ficino's excellent version still keeps its place in the public esteem.

The young student's veneration for the philosopher reached so idolatrous a pitch that it was publicly asserted that, although a Canon of St. Lorenzo and the champion of Christian philosophy, he kept a lamp burning before Plato's bust. Soon extending his studies over the entire field of ancient literature, he eagerly devoured the works of every sage of old. Aristotelians, Platonists, Alexandrians, he read them all with untiring zeal. He sought out the remains of Confucius and Zoroaster; he studied the Book of Genesis; he leapt from one age to another, from this system to that, almost unconsciously: in his overflowing enthusiasm for ancient lore, all was grist to his mill. At one time the learned world had sworn by Aristotle alone, but now extended its faith to all the ancients. This was undoubtedly a token of advance; and the controversy between the Platonists and Aristotelians was in itself an indication of the approaching triumph of reason.[1] But the day of victory had not yet arrived. Philosophy had first to range the whole field of antiquity, and assimilate results, before becoming conscious of its own independence.

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[1] Giacomo Leopardi makes an effort to vindicate the fame of Gemistos in the same "Discorso" from which we have before quoted. "If the fame of Georgios Gemistos Pletho, of Constantinople, has passed away simply for this reason, that human celebrity, as indeed may be said of all human things, depends rather on fortune than merit, . . . it is certain that Gemistos had one of the greatest and most beautiful minds of his time, *i.e.*, of the fifteenth century. He lived in honour in his native land; and then as a survivor of his country and of his Grecian (or, as he said, Roman) name, was welcomed and held dear in Italy, . . . gained a splendid reputation in his new country, and likewise in all other parts of Europe where literary studies were then diffused." G. G. Pletho was born in Constantinople (1355), and died in the Peloponnesus (1450), aged about 95 years. Constantinople had not then fallen into the hands of the Turks; therefore Leopardi was inaccurate in saying that Pletho "survived his own country and his Greek (he said Roman) name." *Vide* Schultze, op. cit., p. 106.

[2] In riper years he condemned these works to the flames.

Ficino was so completely absorbed by his feverish passion for study, that he became a species of living dictionary of ancient philosophy, and his works are practically an encyclopædia of all the philosophic doctrines of his time. He was also versed in natural science, and had received some training in medicine from his father. Nevertheless these studies failed to give him habits of judgment and independent observation. Neither his own reason, the whole of nature, nor the consciousness of humanity, sufficed to guide him to the discovery of truth. He was never content until he could verify results by reference to Plato, or even to some ancient sceptic or materialist.

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[1] In Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" we find the following just remark: "So equal, yet so opposite, are the merits of Plato and Aristotle, that they may be balanced in endless controversy; but some spark of freedom may be produced by the collision of adverse servitude." The closing pages of chapter lxvi. of this work are full of important details and remarks on the character and learning of the Greeks who emigrated to Italy. Recently, however, the works of Burckhardt ("Die Renaissance in Italien") and Voigt ("Die Wiederbelebung des classischen Alterthums") have thrown new light on the classic revival in Italy.

There is a little work by Ficino on the Christian religion, that, although of small intrinsic importance, serves to give us the best notion of the strange jumble of ideas in his brain.[1] In order to demonstrate the truth of Christ's teachings and His Divine mission, we find him beginning with these words:

"The coming of Christ was frequently prophesied by the Sybils; the verses in which Virgil foretold it are known to all. Plato, on being asked how long the precepts of his philosophy would endure, replied: Until the coming of him by whom the source of all truth will be unsealed. Porphyry says in his responses:—The Gods declared Christ to be highly pious and religious, and affirmed that he was immortal, *testifying of him very benignantly.*" Nearly the whole of the work is based upon similar arguments. Therefore, according to him, the testimony of the Sybils, of Virgil, and of Plato, was needed to prove the truth of the Christian religion; together with Porphyry's assurance that the Gods had kindly born testimony to Jesus Christ! Such was the mind of Marsilio Ficino, such were his studies! He was the incarnation of the general spirit of gladness aroused throughout Europe by the discovery of the treasures of antiquity, and his mind was so thoroughly saturated with learning as to become incapable of independent thought. We find him naïvely confessing to his friends, that in composing his great work on "Platonic Theology," he had at first intended to write it from a purely pagan point of view, and only decided after mature consideration on making it accord with Christianity.[1]

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[1] "Della Religione Cristiana." Florence: The Giunti Press, 1568.

This was Ficino's principal work,[2] in which he sought to marshal all his doctrines, in a certain logical and systematic form. But no one must expect to find in it any genuine philosophical unity. None existed in the author's mind, and all his writings take the shape of lengthy dissertations, here and there interrupted and confused by a crowd of secondary ideas gleaned from a host of different writers, Neither scientific unity nor logical sequence of thought is to be found in his works. We do not even find the elegance of style that might well be expected from an author who spent his whole life in the study of Greek literature. So true is it that genuine elegance is only born of clear and precise ideas, and by a spontaneous development of thought that had been stifled in the mind of Ficino.

Nevertheless, in the history of science, more especially in that of philosophy, there is a special unity to be found, a vitality appertaining rather to science itself than to its followers, that makes steady progress and cleaves its way through all difficulties opposed to it by the incapacity of its exponents. The quarrel of the Platonists with the Aristotelians had already concentrated philosophy upon a vital point, and thus Ficino was obliged to collect his ideas and arrange them, almost unconsciously to himself, in some sort of unity and system. In what manner does Nature operate? This was the question then asked by all philosophers; rather perhaps because it was the theme of the great controversy, than from any real appreciation of its importance. Ficino, although a Platonist, would have preferred either to agree with both parties, or keep silence altogether. This, however, was impossible; he was forced, on the contrary, to reason out the subject and discuss it in detail. Thus, even his "Theologia Platonica" contained one fundamental problem, around which all secondary questions were necessarily grouped.

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[1] Bruckeri, "Hist." &c.; "Marsilii Ficini Vita," auctore Johanne Corsio, published by Ang. Mar. Bandini.

[2] V. Marsilii Ficini, "Opera." Basileæ, 1576.

Nature—so he tells us—is animated by a countless number of souls: water, earth, plants, stars, and light, have each a *third essence* or soul of its own. These souls are all rational and immortal, but inseparable from their outer form: they compel Nature to eternal motion by passing through successive transformations; by them water spontaneously generates animals, the earth vegetation, the stars move in perfect order, and all nature is guided by the Eternal Reason. But do these souls correspond with the idea of Plato, or the form of Aristotle? With both, said Ficino. According to Plato, matter exists in so far as it corresponds with an idea; according to Aristotle, in so far as it is possessed of a form. But the latter recognizes in all things one primary form that also predominates in individual things. This form is not substantially different from the idea of Plato, and both are one with the rational soul or *third essence.* It was in this way that Ficino sought to bring Plato and Aristotle into agreement.

This infinite host of souls or *third essences* is divided into twelve orders, according to the twelve signs of the zodiac; they have a mutual correspondence, and are all mirrored in the soul of man, who is almost the microcosm of all creation. Hence, all the souls of nature can act upon the soul of man, inasmuch as an intercorrespondence exists, and this consequently explains to us the influence of the stars. If the planet Mars, in a certain position, can exercise influence over a man, it is because the martial spirits, into which vigour is infused by the planet, are already existent in him. If some stone or herb excites one passion in us and extinguishes another, this is because the *third essence* of such stone or herb finds in our soul the correspondent or opposite passion. Thus the philosophy of Ficino confirmed all the prejudices of his age, from the which prejudices he was by no means exempt. In fact he ascribed his habitual melancholy to the influence of Saturn.[1] He always wore a great number of amulets, continually changing them to suit the condition of his mind, and in his tractate "De vita cœlitus comparanda,"[2] he gave a complete account of the influences of stars, stones, and beasts, and descanted on the occult virtues of the agate and topaz, of vipers' fangs, lions' claws, and so on.

MARSILIVS FICINVS FLORENTINVS

MARSILIO FICINO.

Nor were these ideas peculiar to Ficino. They were characteristic of an age in which, as we have said, similar beliefs were gaining fresh strength and daily becoming more diffused. Whether the Greeks had imported them from the East, or because, in the general absence of assured faith and genuine science, men's minds were peculiarly disposed to superstition, it is certain that the most earnest thinkers of the day were entirely under their influence. Without strength or courage to think for themselves, they greedily pursued these vain imaginations. Alchemy, judicial astrology, and every other occult science, were again propagated at the Universities, the Courts, and in the public squares. All nature appeared to teem with hidden forces, and mysterious spirits holding converse with mortals. All men, and Italians in particular, were oppressed by presentiments of strange events, mighty changes, and overwhelming misfortunes. There were many rumours, too, of the alterations and reforms about to take place in religion. We have seen how Pletho looked forward to the triumph of the Gods of Olympus; and we find the grave and learned Landino drawing the horoscope of religion, and arguing from the conjuction of Jupiter and Saturn that the 25th November, 1484, would be the date of a mighty reform in the Christian faith.[1] It was an age of doubt and superstition, of icy indifference and strange exaltation. Italians incapable of drawing sword in defence of their country willingly braved a thousand dangers in search of a manuscript; and believed in spirits, while doubting the existence of a God. In fact Niccolò Machiavelli said that he thought "the air to be full of spirits, who, in compassion to mortals, gave warning by means of evil omens of the ills about to befall them."[2] And Francesco Guicciardini likewise affirmed the existence of "aerial spirits, namely those holding familiar converse with men, inasmuch as I have witnessed such an experience of this as to make it appear most certain."[3] Accordingly Marsilio Ficino merely referred to antiquity in support of the strange beliefs of his age; and the Neo-Platonic philosophy was marvellously suited to that end.

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[1] This we learn from his Epistolæ, particularly from those in Book III.
[2] Lugduni, 1567. It forms the principal part of his work "De Vita."

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[1] Niccolò della Magna, "Commento Alla Divina Commedia." Florence, 1481. See in particular the passage interpreting the "Veltro allegorico." It has been noticed *à propos* to this date, that Martin Luther was born in the month of November, 1483, or, according to some authorities, 1484.

[2] "Discorsi," bk. i. chap. xvi.

[3] "Ricordi politici e civili," Ricordo ccxi.

According to Ficino, we have to recognize two souls in man—namely, first, the sensitive soul or *third essence*, inseparable from the body and subjecting the body, after death, to the eternal transformations of matter; and, secondly, the mind, or intellectual soul, which is the Divine breath of life, imparted to man by his Creator. This soul is our spiritual and universal nature, is a microcosm of all creation, and in contact with all other souls. Consequently, while drawn to earthly cares, subject to the passions, and full of sorrow and misery, it can rise to the contemplation of celestial things; can see beyond the present, prophesy the future, and, rapt in ecstasy, can behold the blessed vision of Deity. This vision, granted to Plotinus and Porphyry, constitutes the highest felicity attainable on earth; it is the image of the beatitude awaiting us on High. But, what is the Supreme Being according to Ficino? It is Unity. To him, as to all the Neo-Platonists, perfection consists in The One; therefore the Deity is essentially *One*, or indeed *Unity* itself. It might also be said that God is Mind; only that would entail the conclusion that in Him mind is soul and body at the same time. But as the Creator could not deign to come into contact with Nature, He has surrounded His throne with angels, immortal and rational beings, by whose means the creation has been effected of all the *third essences* confided to their charge. Thus from the Supreme Being is emanated an infinite series of souls, of whom one-half is created and governed by the other. The Lord infused His Divine breath into man alone, willing him to be the work of His own hands, and made in His own likeness. For this reason, concludes Ficino, the centre point of the human mind is the point of sublime contact between the Creator and the created.[1]

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[1] This exposition of Ficino's doctrines is entirely derived from his "Theologia Platonica."

Such was the substance of Ficino's doctrines: namely, an imitation of Neo-Platonic theories; an amalgamation, as it were, of all antiquity with the Alexandrian school, fusing these doctrines with Christianity by means of fantastic allegory and puerile device. Platonic ideas, Aristotelian forms, third essences, stars, heathen gods, and the angels of the Old and New Testaments, were to be united in a single conception of a loftier kind. But this new conception was beyond the powers of Marsilio Ficino. He had only a confused feeling that the Pagan and Christian philosophies might be brought into harmony and cease to contradict each other. This was a need strongly felt by his age, and consequently his doctrines, although void of all intrinsic philosophic worth, all originality and all organic unity, have an historic value as an expression of the general sentiment by one who shared it. And notwithstanding the defects of his works, Ficino undoubtedly promoted the cause of science, aiding its advance almost unconsciously, and, as it were, against his will. When he said: The sea has a *third essence* of its own, rivers another, stones again another, and so forth; but there is a *third essence* still more general, constituting the soul of our whole planet; even as in all things there is one form dominating the form of individual things;—he was then, unknown to himself, clearing the way for the first independent and original philosopher that Italy possessed. For what did Giordano Bruno achieve, when, on the wings of novel speculation, he took the sublime and daring flight that led to his tragic end? He merely united in a single soul the numerous souls of Ficino. This, he said, is the soul of the world—mind, body, and soul in one; God and nature at the same time, manifested in infinite ways and infinite worlds; unrestricted by any limits of time or of space: in this soul all opposed terms are brought into accordance. Having once attained to the conception of this new and supreme Unity, Bruno gave free vent to his imagination; the vivid force of his speculative genius broke through the servile traditions of the Platonic school, and, full of "heroic fury," he soared into the free heaven of science, where his star will shine for ever with a special light of its own.

Bruno, however, was only born in the following century, and Ficino never dreamt that he was hewing a path for a mind audacious enough to declare war against the adored antiquity in whose cause his whole life had been spent.

Besides his two great works—the translation of Plato and the "Theologia Platonica"—Marsilio Ficino produced innumerable translations from the Alexandrian writers, tractates, epistles, and orations. He gave public lectures in the Florentine school (studio); was the instructor of three generations of the Medici House, *i.e.*, of Cosimo, Piero, and Lorenzo; and was the leading spirit of the new Academy, which, under his rule, at last began to flourish, to the great contentment of its patrons and approbation of the public. When, later, Lorenzo de' Medici honoured its sittings by his presence and took an animated part in its debates, an infinite number of learned men hastened to solicit the privilege of joining the Academy. They used to read Plato's Dialogues, some of the members taking the parts of the various interlocutors, commenting and supporting their arguments in order to prove that Christianity was taught in them by means of strange and subtle allegories. The Academicians also delivered lengthy Latin orations, and in these the vastness of Ficino's learning was always triumphantly displayed, and Lorenzo's fluent versatility gained hearty applause. The 27th November, the supposed anniversary of Plato's birth and death, and that had always been celebrated with solemn rites by the Neo-Platonists of antiquity, was observed almost as a religious festival by the Florentine Academicians. Crowning the bust of the immortal philosopher with laurel, they enshrined it in a place of honour and hailed it with praises and hymns. By some, fanaticism even went to the extent of proposing that the Pope should be asked to canonize Plato as a saint.[1]

It is difficult to realize the immense importance then attached to this learned assemblage, and the distinction it conferred on Ficino, the Medici, and Florence itself. The city became the resort of scholars from all parts of Italy, and the studious youth of Germany, France, and Spain came there on purpose to attend the lectures of Ficino; for his works were eagerly read throughout Europe, and their merits and defects, truths and errors, alike contributed to swell his popularity. As the discoverer of a system of philosophy reconciling Christianity and Paganism, he was regarded with universal enthusiasm. Even Savonarola was greatly influenced by this Neo-Platonic mysticism, and Ficino praised and admired the Friar in the days of his prosperity, and then—after the fashion of the other learned men—basely forsook and betrayed him in his time of peril.

Meanwhile, however, these same learned men were the undoubted inaugurators of a new epoch of civilization, not only in Florence but throughout Italy. Everywhere professors lectured to attentive crowds, academies and universities flourished, erudite themes were continually discussed; there was an incredible ardour for study. The almost general habit of writing and speaking the Latin tongue, the introduction of printing, by which books were now multiplied and ideas rapidly diffused through the world; the continual effort to bring past, present, and future into harmony—all contributed to draw men closer together, rouse the human species to a consciousness of its unity, and spread the sentiment of universal brotherhood that may some day prove the crowning triumph of Christianity. This was, in fact, the inauguration of modern culture, and, as the leader of the great movement, Italy was the school of the world, the civilizer and teacher of all the European nations, by whom her benefits were afterwards so cruelly repaid. Scholars and erudites, servile plagiarists of antiquity, even Lorenzo de' Medici himself, were all involuntary instruments of this great work, and unconscious contributors to the establishment of modern civilization and the triumph of free thought.

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[1] Many authors have written on the Platonic Academy. Ficino frequently refers to it, both in his works and his letters. *Vide* also Corsi, "Ficini Vita." It is mentioned in nearly all histories of Italian philosophy and literature, in those, for instance, of Fabroni, Roscoe, and Gibbon. In Mr. Harford's "Life of Mich. Ang. Buonarotti," &c., there are some pages on the Platonic Academy, which, although containing little fresh information, have the merit of not being mere repetitions of Roscoe and Tiraboschi. But the best account of the Academy is given by Sieveking, "Die Geschichte der Platonischen Akademie zu Florenz," as an appendix to his short history of Florence, published anonymously at Hamburg in 1844.

CHAPTER V.

HIS FIRST RESIDENCE IN TUSCANY, TRAVELS IN LOMBARDY, AND RETURN TO FLORENCE.

(1481—1490.)

AFTER the first few days in Florence, Savonarola was again oppressed by a feeling of isolation. Intimacy with the inhabitants quickly betrayed the confirmed scepticism and flippancy hidden beneath their great intellectual culture. The general absence of principle and faith once more threw him back upon himself, and his disgust was all the greater in consequence of the lofty hopes with which he had entered Florence. Even among the brethren of St. Mark's there was no real religious feeling, for although the name of St. Antonine was so often on their lips, it was uttered in a vainglorious rather than a loving spirit. But, above all, his indignation was aroused by the much-vaunted studies of the Florentines. It was a new and horrible experience to him to hear them wrangling over the precepts of Plato and Aristotle, without caring or even perceiving that from party spirit and in the heat of discussion they were denying the most essential principles of the Christian faith. Accordingly he began, from that moment, to regard all these men of letters, erudites, and philosophers, with a sort of angry contempt, and this feeling increased in strength to the point of often leading him to disparage the very philosophy in which, by many years of strenuous labour, he was himself so thoroughly versed.

But in no case would it have been possible for him to have long retained the sympathy of the Florentines, inasmuch as they were held apart from the newly arrived Friar by an irreconcilable diversity of temperament. Everything in Savonarola came from the heart, even his intellect was ruled by its generous impulse, but his manners and speech were rough and unadorned. He spoke with a harsh accent, expressed himself in a homely way, and made use of lively and almost violent gesticulations. Now the Florentines preferred preachers of scholarly refinement of gesture, expression, and style, able to give an unmistakable imitation of some ancient writer, and copious quotations from others: as to the gist of the sermon, they cared little about it; often, indeed, conferring most praise on the speaker who allowed them to see that he had little belief in religion. Savonarola, on the contrary, thundered forth furious diatribes against the vices of mankind, and the scanty faith of clergy and laity; he spoke disparagingly of poets and philosophers, condemned the strange craze for ancient authors, and, quoting from no book save the Bible, based all his sermons on its texts. Now there were few Florentines who read the Bible at all, since finding its Latin incorrect, they were afraid of corrupting their style.

Having entered the Convent of St. Mark towards the end of 1481, the following year Savonarola was charged by the friar with the instruction of the novices, and applied himself to the task with his accustomed zeal. Continually dominated by the same mystic enthusiasm, he constantly exhorted his pupils to study the Scriptures, and often appeared among them with tear-swollen eyes.

and wrought almost to ecstasy by prolonged vigils and fervid meditation.[1]

His inspired oratory soon exercised a potent fascination over his youthful hearers, who listened most reverently to his words, and accordingly he was invited to preach the Lenten sermons in St. Lorenzo. But here, in the presence of a coldly critical public accustomed to another style of preaching, and preferring eloquence and doctrines of a very different sort, his words could make no effect. His congregation went on diminishing, until at last, towards the end of Lent, it was reduced to twenty-five persons, women and children included.[2]

Savonarola quickly understood the cause of his failure. He knew what kind of men were most successful in Florence, and the devices employed by them to attract

[1] Burlamacchi, p. 13 and fol.; Cinozzi, "Epistola," Codex 2053. Riccardi Library, Florence.

[2] This is mentioned in Burlamacchi's "Biografia Latina," and Cinozzi, in his biographic "Epistle," states that he attended Savonarola's Lenten sermons in St. Lorenzo the year after the Friar's arrival in Florence, in 1481. Cav. Gherardi is inclined to doubt this ("Nuovi Documenti," p. 246 and fol.), inasmuch as the result of his researches (p. 11 and fol.) was that neither in the latter part of 1482, nor at any period in 1483, had Savonarola preached in St. Lorenzo. If we accept Father Marchese's opinion that Savonarola could not have come to Florence before May, 1482, the time when the war with Ferrara first broke out, it was certainly impossible that he could have preached in St. Lorenzo during the Lenten season of 1482. But we have already shown that, according to the evidence of all the biographers, he may have come to Florence at an earlier date. It is true that we find it recorded in the "Annals of St. Mark's Convent" (c. 219^t) that "Savonarola erudiendis fratribus Florentiam missus est anno 1482;" but this is not enough to overthrow the testimony of the biographers, nor, above all, that of Cinozzi. All these writers were Savonarola's contemporaries and monks of the same convent. Consequently their evidence is at least as good as that of Ubaldini, who first began the compilation of the "Annals" in 1505, with the aid of an older volume (V.a.c.1^v), giving fewer particulars regarding Savonarola. It is also quite possible that his vague, inexact phraseology was merely intended to express that Savonarola was charged with the instruction of the novices in 1482, not that he had only just then arrived in Florence.

the attention of a public almost deaf to the precepts of Christianity, and only delighting in Pagan quotations and elegant turns of speech, with an occasional dash of sceptical or indecent allusion. Accordingly there was no reason to be much disheartened by his want of success. But all who have any experience of the troubles always besetting the first steps of any man's career in life, and the doubts and uncertainties to be overcome, before he can attain to a sure appreciation of his own value, will easily see how painfully Savonarola must have been impressed by the coldness of his reception. He found himself checked at the very beginning of his path, for the way now closed to him was necessary to his existence. He was burning with an irresistible desire to address the world, in order ~~of~~ to convert it to virtue and faith; and day by day his desire burnt more hotly within him. But how was he to move and gain power over hearers such as these? How could he rise to eloquence, when he could elicit no spark of sympathy? The cynical smiles with which his words were received had the effect of a cold douche on his head, paralyzed his heart, and checked his enthusiasm. Accordingly he determined to follow the advice given him by others, and return to teaching and interpreting the Scriptures. The decision cost him much pain, but he saw its necessity, and therefore announced it from the pulpit to his scanty congregation.[1]

Fortunately for him, he was just then sent by his superiors to Reggio d'Emilia, to attend a Chapter of the Dominicans held in that town. He set out on the journey much troubled and oppressed by his mishaps in Florence. His sadness was increased on the road by the news of the war that was then breaking out against his native Ferrara. Reflecting that these ills were solely caused by the insatiable ambition of a Pope, who shamefully plunged all Italy in confusion for the aggrandisement of his so-called nephews, Savonarola became more and more excited, and arrived at Reggio in a white heat of indignation. He came as the representative of St. Mark's Convent; and the Chapter was attended not only by a great number of ecclesiastics, but also by several laymen of distinguished repute in letters and science.[1]

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[1] Burlamacchi, p. 14; Cinozzi, "Epistola."

Of all these visitors, the personage who attracted most attention was the celebrated Giovanni Pico, Count of Mirandola.[2] Although not yet twenty years of age, he was already famed in Italy as a prodigy of science, and the name of Phœnix of Genius, by which he was afterwards known to all, was already bestowed on him by many. Even in childhood his precocious intelligence and marvellous memory had excited astonishment. Making rapid progress in all his studies, he frequented the principal universities of Italy and France, showing a feverish ardour for work. Not content with writing Latin and Greek with even greater ease than his native idiom, he was the first to devote himself to the study of Oriental languages and of all other tongues for which teachers and grammars could be found; and was said to be acquainted with no less than twenty-two. In science as well as languages he aspired to universal knowledge, hoping to grasp the *omne scibile* of his time.

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[1] Cav. Gherardi ("Nuovi Documenti," p. 250 and fol.) proves that the Chapter of Reggio could not have been held in 1486, as was supposed, but only in 1482. Hence the necessity of accepting the fact of Savonarola's brief journey to that place, of which the old biographers made no mention. Nevertheless they all state that Savonarola attended the Chapter, without fixing its date, and furthermore add that at the end of the first Lenten season after his arrival in Florence, he immediately set out towards Lombardy. This would seem to prove that we have placed events in their due order, although the biographers have confused this short journey with the other, and much longer one, afterwards made by Savonarola to the same part of Italy.

[2] Uncle to the Giovanni Francesco Pico who wrote the life of Savonarola.

Being well versed in theology and philosophy, he sought to bring them into agreement, and even to reconcile Paganism with Christianity. Overwhelmed with praise from all quarters, he conceived so lofty an opinion of himself that, on going to Rome in 1486, he proposed a philosophical tournament of a new and singular kind. Issuing nine hundred propositions embracing, as he declared, the whole range of science, he announced himself ready to reply to all comers on every one of these points, sent invitations to the learned world in his own name, and promised to pay the expenses of all combatants unable to afford the journey. His propositions were but poor stuff in the main, and of no special significance; but as some of them touched on judicial astrology and serious philosophico-religious questions, all the nine hundred were condemned by Pope Innocent VIII., and his challenge fell to the ground.

Pico then wrote an Apology, and tendered his submission to the Court of Rome; but it was long before he was pardoned. Nevertheless, and perhaps in consequence of all this, his fame continued to spread. Certainly no other name, Lorenzo de' Medici's alone excepted, became so rapidly and generally celebrated as that of Pico della Mirandola. Posterity, however, has shown him little indulgence, and his reputation has gradually died out. His vast erudition was on the whole very superficial; he was inferior to Poliziano in letters, to Ficino in philosophy.[1] As to his vaunted knowledge of twenty-two languages and their respective literatures, it was so slight that a Jew was able to palm upon him sixty manuscripts as books written by the command of

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[1] Io. Pici "Opera omnia." Basileæ, ex officina Henricpetrina. Two folio volumes, the second of which contains the works of his nephew Giov. Franc. Pico. Pico's philosophy was merely a feeble copy of that of Ficino.

Esdrus, whereas in reality they were only the well-known "Cabbala." And it is certain that his acquaintance with some of the twenty-two tongues went little further than their alphabets. He wrote very inelegant Italian, and his literary judgment was so faulty, that he was one of the critics who rated the poems of Lorenzo de' Medici above those of Petrarch and Dante.[1] Nevertheless he had undoubted merits in other things. He was the first to extend the learning of his age to the Oriental tongues, previously unstudied by all; he was an example of unflagging industry in the cultivation of letters, and of a prince who renounced the privileges of rank to live on an equality with the learned world. His quickness of mind; his wonderful memory; the varied brilliancy of his conversation; his nobility and grace; his youthful beauty; the fair hair falling in thick curls on his shoulders; everything about him, in short, attracted sympathy, and helped to advance his reputation.[2] Such was the man who was the centre of attraction to all the distinguished scholars attending the Chapter at Reggio, and to whom homage was paid by the highest dignitaries of the Church. At that moment, fresh from the Universities of Bologna and Ferrara, where he had completed his studies in theology and philosophy, he was at the height of his youthful beauty, and already renowned for his eloquence.

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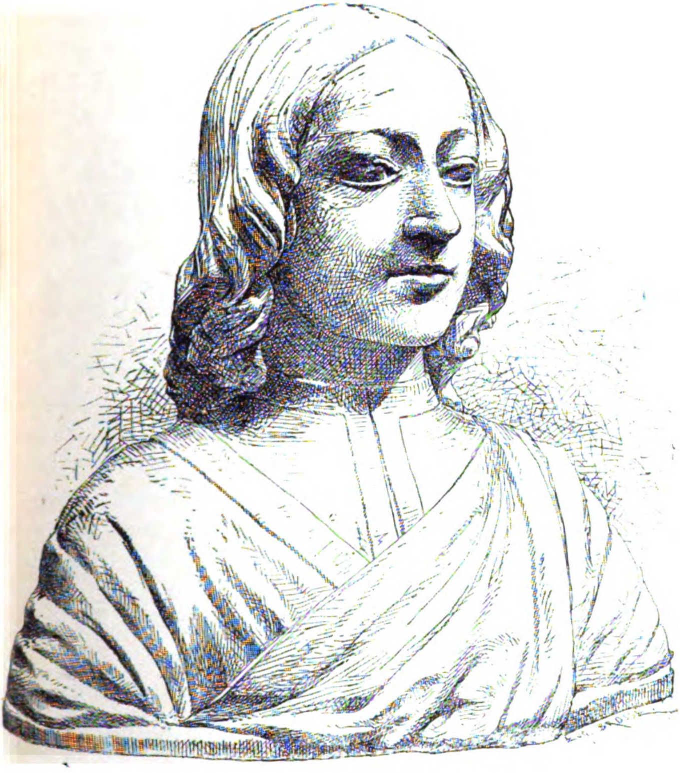
[1] "Lettera" addressed to Lorenzo de' Medici, 15th July, 1484. There were many at that time who held Dante's poetry to be of very little account.

[2] A host of authors have written on G. Pico della Mirandola; but a true appreciation of his powers can only be gained by perusal of his numerous works. These treat of the most varied topics, and although frequently very superficial, are always informed with a genuine and ardent love of truth. Among the many volumes devoted to Poliziano, we must not fail to mention a little known collection of historical essays by the Rev. W. Pair Creswell, published at Manchester, 1805. It contains much useful information on Poliziano and other men of learning.



PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA.

Meanwhile our hero, Savonarola, sat among the other monks, absorbed in his own thoughts, his cowl drawn over his head. His pale and haggard face, the fixed yet sparkling glance of his deep-set eyes, the heavy lines seaming his forehead—his whole appearance, in short indicated a profoundly thoughtful mind. Any one comparing him with Pico, the one full of charm, courteous, sociable, and buoyant; the other full of gravity, lonely, severe and almost harsh, might have judged the two characters to be thoroughly antagonistic and incapable of coming to an understanding. Yet from that day each felt drawn to the other, and their sympathy went on increasing. Neither fame, flattery, nor self-conceit succeeded in spoiling Pico's heart. His nature, unlike that of the other learned men of the day, was essentially good, and readily receptive of the holy inspirations of truth and goodness. Thus, despite all real and apparent dissimilarities existing between them, these two men became united in an enduring friendship.

That same day Savonarola was suddenly stirred to action. So long as the discussion turned upon dogma he remained motionless and silent, not caring to take part in a merely scholastic dispute. But when a question of discipline was mooted, he started to his feet, and his powerful accents had the effect of a thunder-clap upon his hearers and transfixed them with amazement. Inveighing against the corruptions of the Church and the clergy, he was so carried away by the impetus of his own words, that he found it difficult to cease speaking. This harangue revealed him to his audience as an extraordinary man, of superior mental endowment.[1] Many sought his acquaintance; several entered into correspondence with him; but the person most transported by his eloquence was the youthful Pico, who from that day became his sincere admirer, although their reciprocal friendship only grew up at a later date. He began to speak of him as a wonderful man, gifted with a mysterious moral force, and who, once known, could never be forgotten. At that moment, however, Pico's classical studies were leading him in a different groove and with other ideals in view.

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[1] Burlamacchi, p. 15; "Biografia Latina," et c. 4^t.

On going back to Florence, Savonarola resumed his special studies and his labours as a teacher; but he found it impossible to adhere to his former decision of never again attempting to preach. His first sermons, however, were very modest, and only addressed to a small audience in the little church of the Murate convent. The Florentine public still remained unimpressed by his words, for erudition and Paganism were more triumphant in the pulpit than ever.

Frà Mariano da Genazzano, a monk of the Augustinian Order, was then preaching in Santo Spirito, and the great church proved too small for the crowds flocking to hear him. This Frà Mariano was in high favour with the Medici, who had erected a convent for him outside the Porta San Gallo, to which Lorenzo the Magnificent—in his desire to prove the universality of his knowledge—often repaired to discuss theology with him. He had a great reputation in Florence, and especially among the literary men of the Court, who all flocked to hear him and praised him to the skies. Poliziano gives an eloquent description of the orator's merits, in a very beautiful letter, but, unconsciously to himself, his praises betray the faults of preacher and congregation alike.

"I went," writes Poliziano to his friend, Tristano Calco, "feeling badly disposed, and mistrustful of the great praises I had heard of him. But no sooner did I enter the church than the preacher's appearance, his habit and his face, wrought a revulsion in my feelings, and I at once desired and expected great things. I confess to thee, that he frequently seemed to soar to a gigantic height in the pulpit, far beyond all human proportions. And now, behold, he begins to speak! *I am all ears to the musical voice, the chosen words, the grand sentences. Then I note the clauses, recognize the periods, am swayed by their harmonious cadence, &c.*"[1]

Thus, even a man of Poliziano's great taste and learning, was principally struck by the preacher's choice of words and harmonious periods. The friar's name has indeed been forgotten by posterity; but contemporaries extolled him to the sky, and so far, Savonarola was completely overshadowed by this rival. Even Girolamo Benivieni, already his faithful follower, said to him: "Father, one cannot deny that your doctrine is true, useful, and necessary; but your manner of delivering it lacks grace, especially as it is daily compared with that of Frà Mariano." To which Savonarola made reply, almost in anger: "These verbal elegancies and ornaments will have to give way to sound doctrine simply preached."[2] But that was still in the future, and meanwhile Frà Mariano's popularity daily increased. His words, phrases, and gestures were all studied; his lines from the Latin poets were declaimed with much elegance; and he was lavish of quotations from Plato and Aristotle. His sermons were copied from the orations of Ficino to the Platonic Academy, which were then considered models of the highest eloquence; he frequently recounted laughable anecdotes, and used every device to swell the number of his hearers.[1]

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[1] "Politiani Opera," two vols. Lugduni, 1533. *Vide* vol. ii. p. 116, the letter to Tristano Calco with the date *xi kal. Aprilis* 1489. Niccolò Valori, "Vita Laurentii Medicei." Florentiæ, 1749. In Quetif's additions to Pico's "Vita di Savonarola" there are some particulars regarding Frà Mariano da Genazzano. Vol ii. p. 22.

[2] "Epistola" of Girolamo Benivieni to Pope Clement VII., in defence of Savonarola's doctrines and prophecies. It is in the Codex 2022 of the Riccardi Library, and was published by Signor G. Milanesi at the conclusion of Benedetto Varchi's "Storia Fiorentina." Florence: Le Monnier, 1857–58.

The success of a rival of this kind was no humiliation to Savonarola. Nevertheless it irritated him to see a whole city running after polished niceties of form even in church, and, careless of Holy Writ, preferring a preacher who followed Cicero, rather than the Bible, the Fathers, or the martyrs of the Faith.[2] Instead of disheartening him, however, this irritation spurred his indignation and made him increasingly pertinacious of his own ideas. The popular indifference merely proved the necessity of his efforts and convinced him that he had a mission from above. He recalled the history of the prophets of old, and how they had been obliged to fight against the ingratitude of the Jews. The comparison heightened his wrath and strengthened his resolve to war to the death against the vices of the age and the scandals of Rome. In prayer, contemplation, and ecstasy he awaited some direct revelation from God. According to Ficino's philosophy, such revelation was not only possible, but could be scientifically explained, and the Friar, in his religious earnestness and mysticism, so ardently yearned for it, that he at last believed it vouchsafed to him.

In this strangely excited state of mind, further increased by prolonged watching and abstinence, it is not surprising that Savonarola should have seen many visions. On one occasion, while conversing with a nun, he suddenly, as he thought, beheld the heavens open: all the future calamities of the Church passed before his eyes, and he heard a voice charging him to announce them to the people.[1] From that moment he was convinced of his Divine mission, held it to be the main duty of his life, and thought of nothing but how best to fulfil it. He longed to be able to make his voice resound over the whole earth, and cry to all nations : "Repent ye, and return to the Lord." The visions of the Old Testament and the Apocalypse stood arrayed in his fancy as living realities, representing the calamities of Italy and the Church, and symbolical of their future regeneration by his efforts. On all sides he heard voices urging him to persist in his undertaking, without yielding to weariness and without being cast down by the indifference of the Florentines.

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[1] Burlamacchi, p. 24.

[2] All this is proved by Poliziano's letter, quoted above, and the letters of other contemporaries. One of these is given in the Appendix to the Italian edition. Frà Mariano's sermons have never, we think, been published. We have only two of his Orations: one addressed to Innocent VIII., the other to Alexander VI., published during the fifteenth century, and mentioned in Cappelli's "Frà Girolamo Savonarola," &c., p. 12. The second is only to be found in the Public Library of Modena, and neither serves to give us any idea of his sermons.

In the same year (1484) the death of Pope Sixtus IV. occurred, and while many hoped that a successor would be chosen able to put an end to the woes of the Church, it was rumoured that there was some fear of a schism owing to the serious dissensions going on in the conclave. It was then that Savonarola composed a laud, addressed to Jesus Christ, containing these words :—

> "Deh ! mira con pietate in che procella,
>   Si trova la tua sposa,
> E quanto sangue, oimé ! tra noi s'aspetta,
>   Se la tua man pietosa,
> Che di perdonar sempre si diletta
>   Non la riduce a quella
> Pace che fu, quando era poverella."[2]

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[1] This fact was mentioned in the Trial of Savonarola, printed in the fifteenth century, and given, together with the other documents we discovered, in the Appendix to the Italian edition. It is also mentioned by Father Marchese, "Storia di San Marco," p. 118 ; and Frà Benedetto alludes to it in his writings.

[2] "Lauda composta l'anno," 1484 : Poem viii. in the Florence edition of 1847.

Translation.—Ah, look with pity on thy storm-beaten bride ! Look on the blood that must, alas, be shed, Unless Thy merciful hand, The hand ever ready to pardon, Will not restore her to the peace of past days of poverty.

The result of the election shattered the hopes of honest men. All Italy echoed with the details of the scandalous traffic carried on in the conclave; every one knew the names of those who had sold their votes and the prices paid for them. And no sooner had Innocent VIII. ascended the Papal throne, than his conduct of affairs, incredible though it seem, made men look back with regret to the days of Sixtus! For the present Pope no longer disguised his children under the title of nephews, but called them princes, and openly acknowledged them as his sons. He was not only a parent, and a dissolute parent, but so lenient to all descriptions of vice, that the Roman Court became the head-quarters of sensuality and scandalous living. All men were revolted by actions, equally threatening to religion and dishonouring to humanity; nor was it possible to foresee to what fate Italy might be doomed, under the deepening misrule of the Papacy. It had seemed impossible that the successor of Sixtus should not be better than his predecessor, but now all hope and faith in the future were lost. And if this state of things roused even a corrupt people to wrath, what must have been its effect on the mind of Savonarola? Certainly, the storm of emotion stirred in his soul can be more readily imagined than described.

Fortunately for him, in the years 1484-85,[1] he was sent as Lenten preacher to the little republic of San Gimignano among the Sienese hills. It was then very unlike the poor, deserted little town of the present day. Even now its lofty coronal of towers, visible from a great distance, its churches lined with the fairest works of Domenico Ghirlandaio, and Benozzo Gozzoli, and its municipal buildings remain to prove that San Gimignano was once a flourishing centre of artistic and political life. For although its inhabitants may have lacked the exquisite refinement of the Florentines, at least their simplicity was uncorrupted by over-study and sophistry. Their religious ideas were not drowned in a sea of classic phraseology, nor were they, like Poliziano, content to hear nothing from their preachers save skilful syntax and a musical flow of words. Among those hills and valleys the land wears an eternal smile, spring is a season of almost heavenly beauty, and the broad, tranquil horizon seen from the heights reconciles man with nature, and draws him nearer to God.

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[1] *Vide* the "Trial," before quoted.

Therefore, among the towers of San Gimignano, Savonarola could raise his voice more freely and with greater effect. It was here that he first expounded the ideas which had so long filled his soul, and pronounced the words which were to become his war-cry and the standard of his whole life : namely, first, that the Church will be scourged ; secondly, that it will be speedily regenerated ; thirdly, that all this will come to pass quickly. We have his own words to prove that he refrained at the time from announcing these utterances as revelations from Heaven, inasmuch as the people did not seem to him ripe for such things, and he supported them on natural reason and the authority of the Bible.[1]

The history of the Hebrew people, indeed, consists of an unceasing series of transgressions and punishments, and it accordingly furnished Savonarola with numberless arguments to the effect that the universal corruption of the Church must inevitably draw down the scourge of God's wrath.[2] And he expounded these arguments all the more forcibly since they had first convinced him that he was divinely inspired, even before his religious excitement was heightened by the heavenly visions of which he believed himself the recipient. Besides, his courage always rose whenever he inveighed against the corruption of manners, or predicted the scourges to come; his words flowed more freely, were more eloquent and effective; the public attention was roused, his audience moved almost to ecstasy. Accordingly, at San Gimignano he at last found his true vocation; discovered that his own gloomy presentiments were also lurking in the hearts of the multitude, and that by his daring announcement of the scourges at hand he almost revealed the Italians to themselves, and found a general echo to his own thoughts. He therefore returned to Florence in a calmer mood and with greater confidence in himself; but while strengthened in his principles, he had also learnt caution from experience, and was more reticent in his addresses to the indifferent public.

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[1] In Savonarola's "Compendium Revelationum," and in his sermons of 97 and 98, we find the history of his preachings frequently repeated. See too, the "Processo," Benivieni's "Epistola," Burlamacchi, Frà Benedetto, &c.

[2] To Franc. Pico, "Vita," &c. In chap. v. it is minutely explained how Savonarola discovered in the Bible the first grounds of his belief in the necessity of the chastisements he foretold to Italy and the Church.

He retained his modest post of lecturer to the novices to the Lent of 1486, when he was sent to preach in various cities of Lombardy, and especially in Brescia. Here, with the Book of Revelations for his theme, he found it easier to stir the sympathies of his hearers. His words were fervent, his tone commanding, and he spoke with a voice of thunder; reproving the people for their sins, denouncing the whole of Italy, and threatening all with the terrors of God's wrath. He described the forms of the twenty-four elders and represented one of them as rising to announce the future calamities of the Brescians. Their city, he declared, would fall a prey to raging foes; they would see rivers of blood in the streets; wives would be torn from their husbands, virgins ravished, children murdered before their mothers' eyes; all would be terror, and fire, and bloodshed. His sermon ended with a general exhortation to repentance, inasmuch as the Lord would have mercy on the just. The mystic image of the elder made a deep impression upon the people. The preacher's voice seemed really to resound from the other world; and his threatening predictions awakened much alarm. During the sack of Brescia, in 1512, by the ferocious soldiery of Gaston de Foix, when, it is said, that about six thousand persons were put to the sword, the inhabitants remembered the elder of the Apocalypse and the Ferrarese preacher's words.[1]

The great success of these Lenten sermons at last made the name of Savonarola known to all Italy, and decided the course of his life, for henceforward he no longer doubted his mission. Yet, such was the goodness and candour of his nature, that self-confidence only made him more modest and humble. His ardour for prayer, his faith and devout exultation rose to so great a height, that, as his companion, Frà Sebastiano of Brescia, says, Savonarola, when engaged in prayer, frequently fell into a trance; after celebrating mass was so transported with holy fervour as to be obliged to retire to some solitary place; and a halo of light was often seen to encircle his head.[2]

Savonarola remained in Lombardy until the January of 1489, and during that period wrote to his mother from Pavia a long and most affectionate letter. In this he begs her to forgive him if he has nothing but prayers to offer to his family, since his religious profession precludes him from helping them in other ways; but he adds that in his heart he still shares their sorrows and their joys. "I have renounced this world, and have become a labourer in my Master's vineyard in many cities, not only to save my own soul, but the souls of other men. If the Lord have entrusted the talent to me, I must needs use it as He wills;

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[1] Burlamacchi, pp. 13–14; Frà Benedetto, "Vulnera Diligentis," bk. i. chap. xvii.; Pico, chap. v. See also Barsanti, "Della Storia del Padre Girolamo Savonarola da Ferrara." Leghorn, 1782.

[2] Burlamacchi, p. 13 and fol.; Barsanti, &c.

and seeing that He hath chosen me for this sacred office, rest ye content that I fulfil it far from my native place, for I bear better fruit than I could have borne at Ferrara. There it would be with me as it was with Christ, when His countryman said: '*Is not this man a carpenter, and the son of a carpenter?*'[1] But out of my own place this has never been said to me; rather, when I have to depart, men and women shed tears, and hold my words in much esteem. I thought to have written only a few lines; but love hath caused my pen to run on, and I have opened my heart to you far more than was my purpose. Know, then, that this heart of mine is more than ever bent on devoting soul and body, and all the knowledge granted to me by God, to His service and my neighbours' salvation; and since this work was not to be done in my own land, I am fain to perform it elsewhere. Encourage all to righteous living. I depart for Genoa this day."[2]

Of Savonarola's preachings in Genoa nothing is known to us. But we know that in the summer of 1489 he was suddenly recalled by his superiors to Florence, and, strangely enough, at the express desire of Lorenzo de' Medici. The prince made the request in order to gratify his favourite friend, Pico della Mirandola, who had earnestly pressed him to do so. At this moment Pico was in a very difficult position. His nine hundred propositions, published at the end of 1486, had been recently censured in Rome. He had instantly declared his submission to the authority of the Church, and even published an "Apology"; but this only inflamed the anger of the Pope, who threatened the author with excommunication unless he retracted all that he had said. Pico resolutely refused to do this, denying that he had asserted any heretical doctrine, and faithfully adhering to his own theories on philosophy and religion. The matter began to look serious, for Pico was so furious that Lorenzo de' Medici, who had assumed the part of mediator, wrote to Rome to warn the Pope not to go too far, unless he was prepared for a great scandal and wished to drive a devout believer from the fold of the Church.[1] Meanwhile Pico remained very uneasy and disturbed in his mind, and felt the need of advice from some one of real independence of character as well as of lively faith in religion. In these circumstances he remembered the zealous Friar, worn with watching and prayer, whose voice had thundered so grandly at Reggio against the corruption of the Church and the clergy. He accordingly entreated Lorenzo to recall this Friar to Florence, assuring him that the man would be a source of renown both to himself and the city. Lorenzo readily granted his friend's wish, and, making him write the order of recall, affixed his own seal to it and despatched it to the superiors of the Order.

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[1] Savonarola used the term *smith* (fabbro) instead of "carpenter," but we have preferred to give the usual reading.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

[2] Padre Marchese, "Lettere inedite di Frà Girolamo Savonarola," Letter I. (Appendix of the "Archivio Storico Italiano," vol. viii.). This letter to his mother is published from a sixteenth century copy, preserved in the Library of St. Mark and dated: *Scripta in Pavia, in pressia, el di de la conversione di San Paolo Apostolo*, 1490, the which date signifies the 25th of January 1490, since the Lombards did not reckon by the Florentine calendar, according to which the year would have really been 1489. It is our belief that the letter was certainly written in 1489, and that the copyist either made a mistake or reckoned by the Florentine calendar. Otherwise Savonarola could not have returned to Florence in 1489, although we have his own words to prove that he really returned in that year.

Thus the future foe of the Medici, and the destroyer of their power, was summoned back to St. Mark's at the instance of their chief. Pico was as yet slightly acquainted with the man of whom he was afterwards to become so fervent a disciple; and Lorenzo, with all his keen sagacity, neither foresaw the evils he was bringing on his house, nor the flame his own hands were kindling in the convent that his grandfather had built.[1]

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[1] He wrote many letters, some of which are dated 1489. Part of them were published by Fabroni among the documents appended to his "Vita Laurentii Medicis Magnifici;" others were given by Prof. D. Berti in his essay, "Intorno a G. Pico della Mirandola, cenni e documenti," first published in the "Rivista Contemporanea" of Turin (1859). Pico had been to Paris, and was then in Florence.

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[1] Burlamacchi, p. 15, tells us that Savonarola's recall to Florence was effected by Pico's entreaties to Lorenzo and the orders given by Lorenzo to the superiors of the convent. The same statement is repeated in Burlamacchi's "Biografia Latina," C. 4*t*. Mons. Perrens ("Jérome Savonarole, sa vie, ses prédications et ses écrits," vol. i. p. 35. Paris, 1853) expresses doubt as to the interference of Pico and Lorenzo, and, relying on a Codex in the Marcian Library of Venice, says that he was merely recalled by his superiors. This, however, does not preclude the intervention of Lorenzo in the affair. Further particulars are given in certain sixteenth century manuscripts containing an older and more extended compilation of Burlamacchi than the printed version, and one in closer accordance with that author's "Biografia Latina." In fact, we find it stated in the Magliabecchian Codex, I. viii. 43, dating from the sixteenth century, that Pico warmly entreated Lorenzo, and that the latter, "to gratify the Count, for whom he had a singular affection, sent for Ser Piero da Bibbiena, his secretary and counsellor, and bade him write his commands to the Lombard Fathers of the Order of St. Dominic. And then he turned to the Count and said: Since you know that I will faithfully serve you with good will and good ink, your Excellency shall compose the letter after your own fashion, and my secretary shall write it out, and having written it, shall seal it with my seal. And thus was it done. And it befell Lorenzo, as it befell Pharaoh, whose daughter saved Moses and fostered him, by whose means her father was doomed to be drowned." Professor Ranke, in his recent essay on Savonarola, also refuses to credit this fact. But, like Mons. Perrens, he is unacquainted with the Italian Codex from which we quote, and also with the "Biografia Italiana." He observes, however, that the fact must have been known to Pico's nephew, who merely says in his biography of Savonarola, that the friar *ab præposito accersitus, qui Joanni Pico patruo meo hac in re morem gerebat, Florentiam appulit* (*vide* Ranke, op. cit. p. 349). Pico really says: "*Post hæc, et angelicis colloquiis monitus, et ab eius præpositis accersitus, qui Ioanni, Pico patruo meo hac in re morem gerebant, Florentiam appulit*" (chap. vi.). That is to say, he was recalled by his superiors, who in so doing obeyed the will of my uncle, Giovanni Pico. And, according to the Italian codex before quoted, the latter had dictated the letter that was sealed with Lorenzo's seal. Therefore Pico's statement agrees in the main with that in the printed version of Burlamacchi, with the Italian codex and the "Biografia Latina," or at least does not contradict them. But the crowning proof is contained in Lorenzo's "Memoranda" of his daily correspondence, preserved in the "Archivio Medicio avanti il principato" (Cod. No. 63), in which, at sheet 94*t*, we find the following record: "April, 1489, 29th day.—To the General of the Preaching Friars for the recall of Frà Hieronymo of Ferrara." We are indebted for this detail to the kindness of Cav. Gherardi.

Savonarola obediently responded to the summons, but throughout the journey felt a presentiment of coming change. At Brescia strange prophecies had been vouchsafed to him of what should befall him in Florence, and he was therefore convinced that he was bidden to go thither by the Lord's command.[1] Passing by Bologna, he crossed the Apennines on foot. It was the same road he had traversed before; he was returning to the city that had received him so coldly; he felt himself drawn by an irresistible force towards some new and mysterious fate. It was a hot season, and he became exhausted by the fatigues of the journey and great mental excitement. At Pianoro, about eight miles from Bologna, his strength suddenly failed, and he was unable to continue his road, or to take any sustenance. All at once a mysterious stranger appeared before him, restored his courage and strength, led him to a hospice, forced him to take food, and then bore him company to Florence. On reaching the San Gallo Gate the stranger said to him: "Remember to do that for which God hath sent thee," and then disappeared.[2]

It is not very wonderful that, when overwrought by fatigue, Savonarola should have seen a vision of this kind, and it may well be that he mistook for an angelic messenger some mortal companion who succoured him by the way. The reader can furnish his own interpretation to the tale. We recount it, with other legends, as part of the history of the times when even great minds had faith in similar visions.[3] Of Savonarola's special belief in them we have already seen something, and better proofs will be found further on. But, notwithstanding his new fears and excited imagination, the sight of the walls of Florence must have recalled painful memories of his failure to stir the hearts of its citizens. He decided, therefore, to feel his way very cautiously, in order not to incur fresh disappointments, and, resuming his philosophical lectures to the novices, made them the principal objects of his care and hope. While endeavouring to imbue these young men with his own thoughts and feelings, and make them his true disciples, he was content to wait quietly for better times. But the rumour of how he had been called back to Florence at Lorenzo's desire, and how much anxiety Pico had shown to consult him, soon attracted the public attention, and all became anxious to hear his voice. At first his lessons were attended only by the Friars; then a few laymen sought admittance, and he was obliged to consent to their request. In the convent garden of St. Mark's, beneath a damask rose tree that, owing to the veneration of the brotherhood, has been re-grafted down to our own times, he began to expound the Apocalypse to a large and enthusiastic congregation.[1] Then, almost without his being aware of it, his lectures were gradually transformed into sermons. The audience increased daily; the orator spoke in a higher tone, and he was urged by the general entreaty to again mount the pulpit and preach

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[1] Burlamacchi, G. F. Pico, and the other biographers all repeat this on several occasions.

[2] Burlamacchi, p. 15; "Biografia Latina," sheet 4*t*.

[3] We might quote innumerable examples of this belief, but will only refer to the famous letter of Christopher Columbus (also quoted in Libri's "Histoire des sciences mathematiques") describing a similar hallucination that occurred to him in America, when, at the moment that he was for-

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saken by all, he heard a heavenly voice encouraging him to persevere in his enterprise. And Libri justly considers that this letter is one of the finest examples of eloquence in our literature. It gives us a faithful picture of the character of Columbus and his times.

[1] Of Savonarola's lectures on the Apocalypse and other subjects in St. Mark's, as well as of many of his unpublished sermons during these years, nothing remains to us excepting the rough and incorrect notes contained in several autographs, and a few apocryphal manuscripts, of which further details will be given in a special note. Many of these rough notes are included in the Appendix of the Italian edition of this work, doc. v., in order to give the reader some idea of discourses which were probably never written out *in extenso*.

to the people in church. When no longer able to refuse the request, he begged his hearers first to beseech the Lord to enlighten his mind, and finally, one Saturday, issues the following announcement: "To-morrow we will speak in church, and give a lecture and a sermon."

It was the 1st of August, 1489; the church of St. Mark was thronged with people, some sitting, some standing,[1] others clinging to the iron gratings, in order to see and hear the preacher, who, after remaining unnoticed in Florence, had gained so great a reputation in Upper Italy. At last Savonarola appeared in the pulpit; he continued his exposition of the Apocalypse, and the walls of St. Mark echoed for the first time with his three, already well-known, conclusions. At one moment the audience was raised to a transport of ecstasy by his intellectual might and enthusiasm, and his voice resounded with an almost supernatural effect. He had achieved a signal success; all Florence spoke of him, and even the learned men forsook Plato to discuss the merits of the new Christian preacher.

Nevertheless, owing to his continued predictions of calamity, the general wonder and admiration began to be exchanged in many instances for feelings of doubt and even irritation. Opinions began to be divided, and some already regarded the Friar as an ignorant, visionary fanatic, who made an effect rather by dint of loud words and fantastic imagery, than by any real logic or eloquence. But Savonarola was quite prepared for these charges, and having once taken the plunge into rough waters, refused to draw back. He felt that the moment for conflict had arrived. First of all, however, he determined to publish some of his writings, in order to instruct the people and refute the learned men who accused him of ignorance.

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[1] Burlamacchi, p. 19; "Biografia Latina," sheet 5 and fol.

We must now turn to these writings for a better appreciation of his intellectual endowments. Hitherto there was little to be said on this point, his earlier sermons and writings having nearly all perished, or only survived in the shape of well-nigh unintelligible notes.

CHAPTER VI.

SAVONAROLA'S PHILOSOPHY.

OF all Savonarola's works, his philosophical essays, mainly compiled for the use of the novices, were those held in slightest account. Almost all the biographers continued to repeat, without taking the trouble to read them, that they were poor and servile imitations of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. To us this appears a most erroneous judgment, but many circumstances helped to diffuse it. In the first place, the scanty bulk of these essays, and the slight estimation in which they were held by their author; and secondly, in consequence of the numerous charges the Friar brought against philosophy and philosophers, and the vanity of such studies. It seemed improbable that he could have written anything of value on a science of which he spoke with so much contempt; and as parts of the essays were really translations and compendiums of Aristotle and St. Thomas, the prevailing opinion was apparently justified.

Nevertheless, in our anxiety to ascertain the grounds of this verdict, we determined to examine these writings with the utmost care. We knew in how dense a darkness the first glimmer of modern philosophy was veiled, and the difficulty experienced by historians in tracing the source of that dawning light; we knew that in Savonarola's day all writers felt bound to take Plato, Aristotle, or some other ancient authority as their model; but we also knew that when the hour of its regeneration had struck, the new philosophy forced its way through Aristotelians, Platonists, and all the labyrinths of the schools. And thereupon imitators, translators, and commentators began gradually to pulsate with a new life, and follow a new path; but hardly one of these early innovators had the courage to set forth without the support of some ancient sage. Therefore the true value of a philosopher of the Renaissance must not be determined by the fact of his being or not a follower of Aristotle, or having copied him or not in many respects; but rather by his recognition or neglect of the authority of his own reason and his own conscience. Is he really informed by the new spirit? That is the chief question. Thus, in examining Savonarola's philosophical writings, we have not cared to ascertain to what extent he translated from Aristotle, imitated from Boethius, or copied from Aquinas, but rather sought to discover if he had anywhere said: We must rely on our own experience, our own reason; we must believe in the voice of our own conscience and the conscience of mankind.

And another consideration withheld us from accepting the verdict of the earlier biographers: namely, the remembrance of the tremendous vigour with which Savonarola always inveighed from the pulpit against the ancient world in general, and its heathen influences on his own times. On numberless occasions he had accused of materialism the Aristotelian philosophy, of which he has been supposed to be so blind a disciple. "Your Aristotle," he repeatedly said, "does not even succeed in proving the immortality of the soul; is uncertain upon so many capital points, that in truth I fail to comprehend why you should waste so much labour on his writings." But what was still more convincing to us was the freedom and independence of judgment manifested in all Savonarola's compositions, whether on politics, theology, or morals; his subtlety of analysis, his keenness of induction. In order to accept the general verdict we should have been forced to allow—that Savonarola had two opposite systems of philosophy: that in the one he was the slave of Aristotle, a follower of the scholastic method already forsaken by many, and that this was the system he taught in his philosophical writings and imparted to the novices; while in the other, he was free, independent, full of boldness and daring, proclaimed its doctrines in a countless number of theological, political, and moral writings; preached them from the pulpit, and bore witness to them by his whole life. It was to avoid this contradiction that we diligently studied Savonarola's works and philosophical principles, and, the task ended, all contradiction had disappeared.

At that time there were two reigning schools of philosophy in Italy, the Platonist and the Aristotelian. The former, inaugurated by the Florentine Academy, spread in the south, and pushed its theories further and further, until, as we have seen, they were finally merged in the transcendental idealism of Giordano Bruno.[1] The latter, first flourishing under Pomponaccio and many others, spread to the north, in the Universities of Bologna, Padua, Pavia, and throughout Upper Italy; it promoted the experimental method, gave a powerful impulse to physical science, and attained its highest glory in Galileo Galilei. Thus, not only in the ancient, but also in the modern world, Aristotle was the true founder of experimental philosophy, and his fame was unjustly slighted by

[1] Chap. iv.

those incapable of distinguishing between the real Aristotle and the Aristotle of the scholiasts.

From these two schools a third was afterwards evolved. This may be said to have been initiated by Bernardino Telesio, and established by Tommaso Campanella, both natives of Calabria. Telesio studied at Padua, where he was trained in experimental philosophy and physics. He tried to combat Aristotle and promote the experimental method, but in reality he was rather a follower of Parmenides, and composed his book, "De Rerum Natura," under the influence of that writer's ideas. On returning to his native Cosenza, he founded the famous Cosentine Academy, in which Tommaso Campanella was trained. The latter was a thinker of idealistic tendencies, and in deviating to some extent from the path traced by Telesio, gave birth to that third school to which we have alluded. Campanella recommended the experimental method, and attributed to sensation so large a share in the formation of knowledge, as to seem almost a pure materialist; but then, on the other hand, he granted a *cognitio abdita*, or intuition of primary ideas, affirming that from these, even without the aid of sensation, we derive greater certainty than from all others. But he could not find any mode of connecting these primary ideas with sensations, nor of tracing sensations back to these ideas. Accordingly his doctrine amounted to little more than an imperfect eclecticism, in which experimental philosophy, together with a species of Neo-Platonic idealism (for which the author had a natural inclination) are jumbled with the theology of Aquinas. But these contradictory elements are never brought into fusion, never attain to the unity of a system. From time to time, however, we are dazzled by marvellous flashes of genius, and continually struck by the author's vigorous freedom and independence of thought. In fact Campanella's doctrines were the conceptions of a vast brain, full of daring and enterprise, and that although somewhat disordered and confused, gave frequent proofs of extraordinary penetration and preciseness.[1]

Strangely enough, the conditions of Savonarola's life were almost identical with those which afterwards gave birth to the philosophy of Campanella. He too was a Dominican monk, had diligently studied Aquinas, and assimilated the Saint's doctrines with his own ideas; trained from his earliest years in experimental science and Aristotelian philosophy, he had afterwards come to Florence, and found himself in the headquarters of the Neo-Platonic school, and, with a natural tendency to mysticism, had been thrown in the company of Marsilio Ficino and the rest of the Academy. Even intellectually Savonarola bore no small resemblance to Campanella. He too was a free and daring spirit, yearning to project his mind over the whole world: he too sometimes gave forth flashes of light and unexpected strength, while at others hopelessly involved in the mazes of scholasticism. But the Friar had one great advantage over Campanella; for in the depths of his mind and heart there lay a moral idea, clear, precise, and powerful, constituting the pith of his thoughts, the light of his life, and the unity of his existence.

In short, there is so strong a resemblance between the philosophical systems of these two Dominicans, that it is a matter of surprise that we should be the first to mark it.[2]

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[1] Campanella, "Metaphysica." Parisiis, 1638. There is one copy of it in the National Library of Florence. The greater part of Campanella's other works are in the Riccardi and Marucelli Libraries of the same city.

[2] Padre Marchese, "Storia di San Marco," p. 164, attempted to prove a certain resemblance between the political ideas of Savonarola and Campanella, comparing the latter's "Città del Sole" to Savonarola's "Reggimento di Firenze." But, as we shall see, the two friars held very different ideas on politics. The "Città del Sole" was part of Campanella's "Utopia," not of the system he sought to put into practice; therefore it cannot fitly be compared with the "Reggimento di Firenze." But this

Before treating in detail of Savonarola's philosophical works, we will first remark, that the old catalogues of his manuscripts serve to show that he had devoted much labour to the science, and that some of his works upon it have perished. Among these was a compendium of nearly all the works of Plato and Aristotle.[1] His printed essays are contained in a single volume, consisting of four short tractates: "Compendio di filosofia, di Morale e di logica," and lastly, of a pamphlet on the "Divisione e dignità di tutte le scienze."[2]

His Compendium of Philosophy begins by treating of entity, motion, the primary motive force, heaven, the generation and decay of all things; and thus proceeds to subject the whole of nature to examination, in an ascending scale, from inanimate objects to man. He describes the world as it was then described by the Aristotelians:

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point will be treated elsewhere. As to the philosophical works of Savonarola, Marchese tells us (p. 104): "We have here a complete compendium of the writings of the Stagirite, in all their variety." Herr Meier, always a very painstaking writer, says with more exactness: "Aristoteles bildet natürlich die Grundlage, doch zeigt sich bei häufiger Berücksichtung des Thomas von Aquino, auch eigenes Urtheil und Kritik. Der Stil ist meistens leicht, und ein Streben nach Klarheit und Bestimmtheit nicht zu verkennen" ("Savonarola," &c., Erst Kap., s. 25). Rudelbach, writing with the sole aim of discovering Protestant ideas, pays no attention to Savonarola's philosophical works. Mons. Perrens, on the contrary, gave them careful examination, but merely translates some passages from them, without pronouncing any judgment upon the value of their doctrines. Nevertheless he expresses an opinion in accordance with the traditional verdict: "Ces écrits sont donc, pour ainsi dire, des catechismes sans prétention." "L'Auteur n'y met rien du sien" (vol. ii. p. 308).

[1] "Aristotelis pene omnia opera, et Platonis abreviati." This is the title given in the catalogue, "De operibus viri Dei non impressis," at the end of the "Biografia Latina," and included in the Appendix (Doc. vi.) to the Italian edition of this work.

[2] "Compendium totius philosophiæ" (to which in other editions are added the words: "tam naturalis quam moralis"); "Opus de divisione omnium scientiarum;" "Compendium Logices." Venetis: Lucæ Antonii Juntæ, 1542. There are many other and some older editions of these works. The treatise on the Art of Poetry, of which we shall speak elsewhere is often included among them.

namely, as a huge animal informed by three great souls, the vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual (or comprehensive) souls. On this subject it is unnecessary to follow the author in detail, inasmuch as he only repeats the ideas of the school. But in the theory of cognition we recognize Savonarola's own bold touch and freedom of mind, and will therefore give it less summary treatment. "We must start from things best known," he says, "to arrive at the unknown; since only thus is it easy to reach the truth."[1] Sensations are nearest and best known to us; they are stored in the memory, when the mind effects the transformation of many individual sensations into a single general rule or experience. After this it carries on the process until from the union of many experiences universal truths are deduced.[2] Therefore true wisdom is directed towards first principles and first causes; it is speculative, free, and of a very lofty nature.[3] All our knowledge, therefore, proceeds from sensation; hence in philosophy all that is perceptible to the senses must precede that which is imperceptible to and above the senses."[4] Elsewhere he treats in the same fashion of the process by which sensation is transformed into idea. "Sensations are stored in the shape of pictures in our fancy; there the intellect seizes upon them, and by its own virtue transforms them into intellectual acts."[5] From sensation, therefore, without any real process of ratiocination, and *without any doctrinal authority*, our knowledge is derived. Nevertheless the intellect itself could not convert sensation into idea *without pre-existing intellectual cognition*, deprived of which it would be merely a *force*, incapable of achieving the act of knowing, incapable of comprehending even the meaning of words. *Consequently every doctrine must be founded on pre-existing cognitions of the senses, and on the*

[1] Bk. i. p. 17. [2] Bk. i. pp. 2, 8. [3] Bk. i. pp. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.
[4] Bk. i. p. 28. [5] Bk. xiv. p. 7.

pre-existing cognition of first principles. These are known to us without any demonstration, inasmuch as they are true and self-evident.[1] They may indeed seem far from us and very hard to understand, but are substantially the very essence of truth and evidence. For not only are they true in themselves, but constitute the truth of other principles of experience apparently nearer to us and more easily understood. And truly the things best known in themselves are those sharing most in the *actum essendi*, as, for instance, God Himself, primary intelligences, and primary principles. Our intellect proceeds from the power to the act of knowing; in the potential state it perceives with certainty, and almost by intuition, such first principles as it finds clearest and nearest to itself; but on coming to *the act of knowing*—that is to say, when we are forced to rise from the individual to the general—we then find them most remote and most difficult."[2] Not that the difficulty consists in knowing the cognitions pre-existing in the intellect, but in placing primary ideas in relation with primary sensations, and in filling the immense void between them: namely, in establishing the first foundations of science.

This was the sagacious way in which Savonarola attacked the fundamental problem of philosophy, but he went no farther, and made no attempt to conquer the difficulties he had so clearly discerned. He often repeats that the inductive method is the best by which to proceed from the known to the unknown; but as he is content with these vague generalities, there is the same void in his system that was afterwards found in Campanella's. In our author also we may often note a contradictory order of ideas, and in his mind likewise Platonic and Aristotelian doctrines are jumbled with the theology of Aquinas without being brought into complete harmony with it. Nevertheless, of the two philosophers Savonarola is the easier to excuse, inasmuch as he was not solely devoted to philosophy, and in the short tractates, expressly composed for the use of his novices, it was impossible for him to attack, much less to solve, the hardest problem of science.

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[1] "Logica," Bk. viii. p. 5.

[2] Comp. Phil., bk. i. p. 13. See also bk. i. pp. 17, 18, bk. ii. p. 4; "Logica," bk. viii. pp. 6, 7, 8. Perusal of these writings will show that as regards form, language, and many of their ideas, they are entirely Aristotelian, but that, nevertheless, the doctrines inculcated show considerable originality and the working of an independent mind. And this will be still better understood if we reflect that in lecturing to the novices Savonarola was compelled to adhere to traditional forms, inasmuch as in his day, and for many following centuries, the scholastic philosophy alone was allowed to be taught in monastic establishments. At the present day theology is the only flourishing study in convents, and even this, as all know, is always taught on the scholastic method.

No more need be said of this first treatise or Compendium of Philosophy in general, for in the rest of it the author is content to borrow from Aristotle, frequently copying and summarising his words.

In the treatise on Moral Philosophy Savonarola treads in the steps of Aquinas, but with a leaning towards Neo-Platonic ideas betraying the influence of Ficino and the Academy. "The ultimate end of man," he says, "is undoubtedly beatitude, the which does not consist, as natural philosophers would have it, in the contemplation of speculative science, but in the pure vision of Deity. In this life we can only have a distant image, a faint shadow of that beatitude; in the next life alone can we enjoy it in its fulness and reality. And although this beatitude is not to be obtained by human efforts alone, yet man must strive for it by a *motus ad beatitudinem* that will endow him with the disposition required for its reception. God alone is in Himself blessed; man has need of many efforts, *motibus multis*, and these consist in good works, which are also called merits, *because beatitude is the prize of virtuous deeds*."[1]

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[1] Comp. Phil. Mor., bk. i. p. 25.

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Here it should be noted that in philosophy as well as in theology Savonarola always insisted on the efficacy and necessity of good works, and consequently on man's free will. "It is free will," he continues, "that distinguishes man from beast, the which free will is neither a quality nor a habit, but the very essence of human will, *est ipsa hominis voluntas*."[1] He then inveighs against the astrologers' dictum of the human will being influenced by the stars. "Our will can be moved by no extraneous force, neither by the stars, nor by the passions, nor even by God. For the Creator does not destroy, but preserves, moving the world and all created things after the laws of their nature. Now, as we said, if our will is of its nature essentially free, if, indeed, it is freedom itself, God may move it, but always leaves it free, in order not to destroy it." This tractate contains many just and acute remarks, but as we shall find them in still greater abundance in Savonarola's other writings we need not dwell upon them here. It may, however, be useful to quote a few of his ideas concerning veracity, for the instant confutation of those who have accused him of wilfully playing a false part, and claiming to be a prophet in order to increase his influence over the people. We consider this charge to be clearly disproved by the evidence of all Savonarola's acts and words, but meanwhile let us see what he tells us in his Moral Philosophy :—

"By veracity we mean a certain habit, owing to which man shows himself, both in word and deed, as he really is, and rather lesser than greater. . . . This is rather a moral than a legal duty, insomuch as it is certainly a debt of honesty owed by every man to his neighbour, and the manifestation of truth is always a part of justice."[2] We need not dwell here on Savonarola's utterances on Politics and Economics, which, according to the scholastic doctrines, were both included in Moral Philosophy, for we shall have occasion to mention them in some detail when examining their author's ideas upon politics. Neither shall we analyze his "Logic," since it is a mere summary of the dialectic of the schoolmen, and we have already mentioned the few important ideas contained in it.

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[1] Comp. Phil. Mor., bk. i. pp. 26, 27.

[2] Comp. Phil. Mor., bk. vi. p. 23.

Something must now be said of Savonarola's pamphlet on the "Division of all the Sciences," written in answer to the accusation of despising poetry and holding philosophy in no account. In his defence he drew up a general table of the sciences, showing that he assigned to each its proper position, and respected all according to their rank. This table is clear, precise, and well-executed, but is, fundamentally, the same division adopted by the scholiasts. Philosophy consists of two divisions—the rational and the positive; the first, acting as a guide to reason, is logic; the second treats of real entities, and is subdivided into practical and speculative philosophy. And practical philosophy is further divided into mechanical and moral, according to whether it treats of the mechanical professions or moral actions of man; while moral philosophy is subdivided into ethical, economic, and political. Three sciences—physics, mathematics, and metaphysics—come under the head of speculative philosophy, which can treat of either that which is inseparable from matter, separable from matter only in the abstract, or absolutely immaterial. He proclaims metaphysics to be the queen of all the sciences, since it seeks the highest truths, and more than any other serves to ennoble and elevate mankind.[1] But Savonarola is careful to add: that is, speaking *secondo puri naturali*, since, Christianly speaking, theology is the true and only science. All the others treat of special things under special aspects; theology alone treats of all under a single and universal aspect; theology is the first science tracing all things to the first cause; and for this the light of nature is not sufficient, the light of heaven being also required.

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[1] Mamiani praises Campanella's division of the sciences, and prefers it to that suggested by Bacon. The latter, he remarks, gave us a subjective division, according to our mental faculties (memory, imagination, reason); the former made a more rational division, in accordance with the special nature and aim of the various sciences (Mamiani, "Del Rinnovamento dell' antica filosofia Italiana," pp. 37, 38. Paris, 1834). And this has

From this it is easy to see that this supreme science overshadowed and took precedence of all the rest; and we

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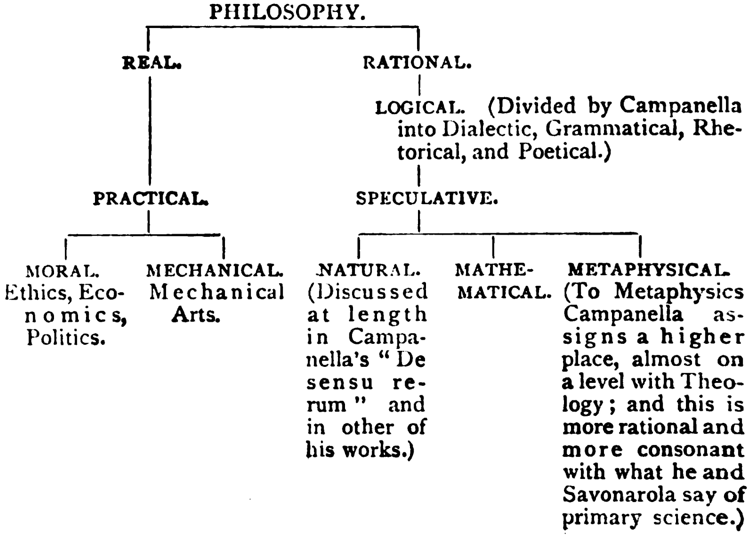
been frequently repeated by other writers. In fact, Campanella divides the sciences in several different ways, and never remains constant to one idea. Practically, his arrangement of the sciences is almost the same as that followed in the Middle Ages, placing theology at the head of all. Even in this Savonarola resembles Campanella, for he does the same. Neither showed any real originality in their division of the sciences, and it is impossible to give them the preference over Bacon. The following table will give a clear idea of the division adopted by Savonarola:—

SAVONAROLA'S DIVISION OF THE SCIENCES.



- PHILOSOPHY.
  - **REAL.**
    - **PRACTICAL.**
      - MORAL. Ethics, Economics, Politics.
      - MECHANICAL. Mechanical Arts.
  - RATIONAL.
    - LOGICAL. (Divided by Campanella into Dialectic, Grammatical, Rhetorical, and Poetical.)
    - SPECULATIVE.
      - NATURAL. (Discussed at length in Campanella's "De sensu rerum" and in other of his works.)
      - MATHEMATICAL.
      - METAPHYSICAL. (To Metaphysics Campanella assigns a higher place, almost on a level with Theology; and this is more rational and more consonant with what he and Savonarola say of primary science.)

can understand the sovereign contempt afterwards shown by Savonarola for philosophy, poetry, and profane studies in general.

We have only dwelt upon the chief divisions of science, without referring to Poetry (classed by Savonarola with Logic, according to the scholastic rules), but of this we shall have occasion hereafter to speak at length. At this point we need only quote what the Friar said of those who were in all things, and especially in poetry, servile copyists of the ancients. "Some have so narrowed their minds and fettered them with the chains of antiquity, that not only do they refuse to speak save as the ancients spake, but will say nothing that has not been said by them. What reasoning is this, what new power of argument? That if the ancients spoke not thus, neither will we speak thus! Therefore if no good deed was done by the ancients must we then do none?"[1] And this was the tone always maintained by him. In an age when every book that appeared sounded the praises of the ancients and inculcated the necessity of imitating them in all things, Savonarola alone raised his voice against these exaggerations. He did still more, when, discarding the ancients altogether, he followed the dictates of his own reason and pressed forward without any other support. This is shown not only by his philosophical writings, but by the still clearer and more abundant proofs of independent thought afforded by his sermons and political and theological treatises. Let us take, for instance, his principal work, "The Triumph of the Cross"—an exposition of Christian doctrines according to natural reason. In the preface we find the following passage: "Whereas in this book we shall only discuss by the light of reason, we will refer to no authorities; but proceed as though no reliance could be placed on any man in the world, however wise, but only on natural reason."[1] And further on, "It is by visible things that we must arrive at the knowledge of the invisible, forasmuch as all our knowledge is derived from sensation, which only comprehends outer, bodily attributes; whereas by intellect, which is subtle, we can penetrate to the substance of natural things, and, after considering these, attain to the knowledge of invisible things."[2] It must not be supposed that these are detached thoughts, scattered here and there in the work, for, on the contrary, they are stated in the preface and serve to indicate the design and method of the whole. Every chapter starts by premising the hypothesis, that nothing has been learnt from any man, and by repeating that we must accept no authority save that of our own experience and reason. Thus it goes on to the end, proceeding from the known to the unknown. And whenever, either in sermons or other writings, Savonarola inculcates virtue, and urges political reform, his practical independence of mind is even still clearer and more visible.

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[1] "Opus perutile de divisione ordine ac utilitate omnium scientiarum. . . . In Poeticen Apologeticus, p. 40. Venetiis: Aurelii Pinci, 1534. There is also a fifteenth century edition undated. There is a singular resemblance between the words quoted above and the ideas expressed by Campanella in his "Poetica" and the tract "De libris propriis."

When we remember that he lived in the fifteenth century, when Marsilio Ficino was esteemed the greatest of European philosophers, it must certainly be granted that Savonarola was one of the first to emancipate philosophy from the yoke of the ancients, and that our praises are just and based on a close and impartial examination of his works. The old biographer, Burlamacchi, who was personally acquainted with the Friar, says of him: "that even in his early childhood he would not judge authors according to their fame, nor be content to accept opinions merely because they were in vogue, *but always kept his*

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[1] *Proemio* to the "Trionfo della Croce."

[2] Ibid. chap. i.

eye fixed on truth and reason."[1] These brief, simple words give a better portrait of the man than any furnished by later biographers; and we ourselves, after prolonged study of our author's works, can accept the old chronicler's verdict.

Nevertheless, we have no intention of overrating Savonarola's philosophy in order to exaggerate his scientific merits. He often slighted philosophy, continually censured it, and sometimes spoke of it with contempt. If his short treatises on the subject have been forgotten, it is mainly owing to his own reticence concerning them. They are unmentioned in any history of philosophy, unquoted by any later philosopher; and their existence seems to have been ignored even by Campanella, although, as we have seen, the latter was in some sense a disciple of Savonarola. But although these reasons may diminish the scientific importance of his writings, they cannot detract from the weight of their testimony as to their author's mind.

It was of the highest importance to ascertain the intellectual strength of a man having so large a share in the events of the period during which all Europe was preparing for the renewal of civilization and the reassertion of human reason. Whatever may have been Savonarola's mission, whatever his temper, whatever his aims, it was imperative for us to define his place as a thinker, and decide whether he was or was not to be ranked among the ***new men***.

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[1] Burlamacchi, p. 5. Pico, p. 8, says: "Mirus erat veritatis amator, eo usque provectus eius gratia, ut in his quos coleret doctoribus si quid non placeret. ingenue fateretur." Almost the identical words are to be found in the "Biografia Latina," which agrees on this point with Frà Benedetto ("Vulnera Diligentis"), and with all the writers who were personally acquainted with Savonarola. Many learned men of the fifteenth century also held Savonarola's philosophical doctrines in the highest esteem. Ficino (in a letter to Gio Cavalcanti, December 12, 1494) and Poliziano (in a letter to Jacopo Antiquaris, May 18, 1492) both call him a man of *distinguished* learning; Pietro Crinito, in his "De Honesta disciplina," bk. i. chap. 3, says of him: "Qui ætate nostra in omni prope philosophia maxime præstat." Finally, we may quote the opinion of a still higher authority. That Francesco Guicciardini was one of Savonarola's greatest admirers, is clearly proved by his "Opere Inedite." He had closely studied the Friar's writings, and made summaries of some of his sermons, always speaking of them with sincere admiration. As to philosophy he says: "Even his enemies confess him to have been versed in many branches of learning, especially in philosophy, which he had mastered so thoroughly and made so great a use of on all occasions, as though he had been its creator" ("Storia Fiorentina," p. 178).

We are now convinced that, unless we place him at the head of these men, of whom he was the precursor and prophet, and of whose heroic virtues, daring aspirations, and fantastic errors he had so large a share, we shall never be able to understand his true character. So far, in spite of all that has been written upon the subject, no one has yet arrived at an exact definition of its worth. No just comparison can be drawn between Savonarola and the contemporary philosophers and learned men, for he was not only opposed to Paganism, but took a far more serious view of the problems of life. His real originality consisted in recognizing the weight of reason, experience, and conscience in both scientific and practical questions, but without separating science from the religion in which he believed, and without admitting—as many then admitted—that man might hold one faith in philosophy, and another in religion. And in virtue of this, he was the precursor, prophet and martyr of the new epoch.

CHAPTER VII.

SAVONAROLA'S FIRST RELIGIOUS PAMPHLETS AND HIS INTERPRETATIONS OF THE SCRIPTURES.

IN examining the great tide of civilization that began to advance over Europe in the sixteenth century, after the Italian Humanists, and partly by their work, we shall find at the base of the new philosophical and religious doctrines, and in the midst of the hottest struggles and disputes, a general yearning to bring men nearer to God. This yearning was the source of the fresh enthusiasm with which philosophers, theologians, and martyrs were fired. For what was the aim of the new philosophy? The abolishment of every contradiction between the earthly and the heavenly life, between the human mind and nature; the reunion of the creature, animated by the Divine afflatus, with the Creator, so that all things might be fused in one idea by means of the Pantheistic creed taught by Giordano Bruno's pen, and consecrated by his death at the stake. What was the promise held forth by the doctrines of the Reformation? To bring the devout into direct communion with their God, without the intervention of the priest. Ceremonies were superfluous; good works were unnecessary, being valueless of themselves; by grace alone were the predestined saved, and the believer was an instrument in the hands of God, and must have faith in God alone. This new love and irresistible impulse of the soul, to which Bruno gave the name of "heroic fury;" this faith in the Divine finally rescued mankind from the abyss of scepticism and corruption, in which all at that time were more or less engulfed. It reawakened science, promoted the Reformation, gave new strength to Catholicism, new youth to society, and inaugurated modern culture.

Towards the close of the fifteenth century we can see that men's minds were already stirred by a new warmth; that they were beginning to have hope in the force of ideas and principles; were dissatisfied with the actual state of things, and moved by new aspirations. The first sign, or indeed the animating principle, of this renovation appeared in the philosophy of the Alexandrian school, which promised the direct vision of God, and announced that to be the sum of human felicity. This idea, being supported by Ficino and his Academy, gained popularity at once, made rapid way, and penetrated to the hearts of men, at the time when, to all appearance, the reign of materialism seemed permanently assured. But while this idea was still in the preliminary stage of a theory derived from books, we find that Savonarola was possessed by it from his birth, that it ruled his whole life, and may indeed be said to have been his life itself. His sole aspiration was towards God, and his sole desire to make the world share in the blessedness of his hopes.

The writings Savonarola gave to the world about the year 1492 serve to bear out this view, for the greater part of them are filled with manifestations of a religious zeal to which the term of "holy fury" may well be applied. Nearly all of them are short pamphlets, and (especially the tractates on Humility, Prayer, the Love of Jesus Christ, the Widowed Life) in part ascetic, in part purely religious and moral works. It will be our endeavour to describe the ideas contained in them with the utmost fidelity, so that the reader may duly appreciate the means by which Savonarola's ascendency over the people was originally established.

In the first of these tracts he tells us "that the virtues of humility and charity form the two extremities of the spiritual edifice;[1] because humility is the foundation of the fabric, and charity the perfection and consummation of the whole. Therefore it is meet that the faithful should abase himself before God, recognize that he can do no good of himself, and that without the help of the Lord all his deeds would be sinful. Nor is it enough that he should have an intellectual belief in this; he must also feel it profoundly in his soul. The will of man is free, therefore he must use all his strength to crush pride, and become a vessel of grace; and for this, outward actions will be not only useful, but necessary. The believer must humble himself before his superiors and before his equals; let *him* also humble himself before his inferiors. But if, on reaching this point, he should hold himself to have done a great deed, then outward humility will have increased to the detriment of his inner state, and he will have forfeited all merit. Let him, then, remain steadfast to the idea of his own unworthiness."

In the tract upon Prayer, Savonarola tells us that prayer[2] is one of the most efficacious means of preserving in man a lively feeling of humility. "Wherefore let him daily pray fervently and long. But let us always remember that prayer must be accompanied by humility and charity, or it is of no avail. Where there is fervour, there, too, is prayer, and therefore, in doing deeds of charity, a man may be said to pray."

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[1] "Trattato dell' Umiltà," Firenze, per Antonio Miscomini, the last day of June, 1492. Fourteen leaves in all. Other editions: Florence, 1495; Venice, 1537, 1547. Both in Audin and in the Guicciardini catalogue several other fifteenth century editions are quoted—undated. In describing the contents of these pamphlets we adhere, as closely as possible, to the author's text.

[2] "Trattato e vero sermone della orazione," Firenze, per Antonio Miscomini, 20th October, 1492. This pamphlet also consists of fourteen leaves. Other editions: Florence, 1495; Venice, 1538; five of the fifteenth century, undated.

We find these ideas still better developed in a similar tract on mental prayer.[1] "He who prays must address God as though he were in His presence; inasmuch as the Lord is everywhere, in every place, in every man, and especially in the soul of the just. Therefore let us not seek God on earth, nor in heaven, nor elsewhere; rather let us seek Him in our own heart, like unto the prophet that sayeth, 'I will hearken unto that which the Lord shall say in me.' In prayer a man may take heed to his words, and this is a wholly material thing; he may take heed to the sense of his words, and this is rather study than prayer; finally, he may fix his thoughts on God, and this is the only true prayer. We must consider neither the words nor the sentences, but lift our soul above our self, and almost lose self in the thought of God. This state once attained, the believer forgets the world and worldly desires, and has, as it were, a foreshadowing of heavenly bliss. To this height it is as easy for the ignorant as for the learned to rise; indeed, it often comes about that one repeating the Psalms without understanding them makes a more acceptable prayer than the wise man who can interpret them. Words, in fact, are not essential to prayer; on the contrary, when man is truly rapt in the spirit of devotion, speech is an impediment, and should be replaced by mental prayer. Thus it is seen how great is the error of those that prescribe a fixed number of orations. The Lord taketh not joy in a multitude of words, but rather in a fervent spirit. Hereupon we shall be assailed," Savonarola adds, "by those whose sole concern is to defend the ceremonies and exterior rites of the Church. To these we will make answer, even as our Saviour to the Woman of Samaria—'Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth' (St. John's Gospel, iv. 21–23). The which signifies that the Lord desires inward worship, without so many outer ceremonies; and such was the usage in the primitive Church, when men could raise their thoughts to God without need of organ music and chants. When fervour slackened, ceremonies were introduced, as medicines to men's souls. In these times, however, Christians have become like unto a sick man, from whom all natural strength hath departed, and medicines have no more power over him. All fervour and inward worship are dead, and ceremonies wax more numerous, but have lost their efficacy. Wherefore we are come to declare to the world that outward worship must give way to inward, and that ceremonies are naught, save as a means of stirring the spirit."

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[1] "Della Orazione Mentale," Florence, 1492, 1495; Venice, 1538, 1547. Other fifteenth century editions, undated.

But the treatise on the Love of Jesus Christ,[1] of which many editions rapidly appeared, is a still clearer expression of the mystic enthusiasm with which, as we have said, Savonarola's soul was possessed. "The love of Jesus Christ is the lively affection inspiring the faithful with the desire to bring his soul into unity, as it were, with that of Christ, and live the life of the Lord, not by external imitation, but by inward and Divine inspiration. He (the faithful) would seek that Christ's doctrine might be a living thing in him, would desire to suffer His martyrdom, and mystically hang with Him on the same cross. This is an omnipotent love, only to be attained by the operation of grace, inasmuch as it raises man above himself, and unites the finite creature with the infinite Creator. Man, in fact, is continually rising from humanity to divinity, when animated by this love, which is the sweetest of all affections, inasmuch as it penetrates the soul, masters the body, and causes the faithful to walk the earth like one floating in ecstasy."

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[1] "Trattato dell' amore di Jesù Cristo," Firenze, per Antonio Miscomini, the 17th day of May, 1492. A pamphlet of twenty-eight leaves. A second edition appeared in the June of the same year; there are also five more, undated, besides those published in the sixteenth century, one which was issued by the Giunti Press in 1529. These editions of Savonarola's pamphlets are very elegant and often illustrated with woodcuts by the first artists of the period.

We have here given an almost literal version of Savonarola's words, because this conception of love, recurring continually in his works, and a fundamental point of his doctrine, has never yet received adequate remark. It is true that Savonarola gives no very clear definition of it, since he sometimes declares this love to consist only in grace, and at others only in charity. In truth it partakes of the nature of both, without being exclusively the one or the other. When grace is infused into man, it forthwith generates charity; in fact there can be no true charity without grace. But there is an intermediate state, in which the believer, feeling the nearness and almost the breath of God, experiences a supreme felicity, a species of celestial intoxication. This inner state of the mind, predisposing it to grace already indeed conscious of its approach to generate charity, is precisely the state designated by Savonarola as the *love of Jesus Christ.* This conception was an important point in his doctrines precisely because he affirmed that this love, although an entirely subjective state of the mind, sufficed, nevertheless, to predispose it to grace. It is true that no Christian can acquire charity without grace, which is the free gift of

God, and scarcely to be obtained by the help of our own will; but love, on the contrary, being merely a disposition of the mind, man may more easily attain to it by his own effort. Thereupon grace is almost naturally infused in him, and, as a necessary consequence, charity wells up in his heart. Thus, *love* has the superhuman power of joining the finite creature to the infinite Creator, and explains in some degree the mystery of human freewill and Divine omnipotence.

The pamphlet concludes with a few stimulating contemplations (*Contemplazioni infiammative*), in which Savonarola gives vent to all kinds of exclamations on the goodness and mercy of the Lord, on the ardent longing of his soul to become as one with Him, to be bound on the same cross, pierced by the same nails, and crowned by the same thorns. If we read these things in the sceptic spirit of the present day, we shall certainly fail to discern any merit in them; but if we reflect that they were written for the people, were the utterances of a soul in the transports of complete prostration before God, and of a man who found in this holy delirium a species of consolation entirely unknown to ourselves, we shall come to a juster appreciation of them. And their value will be increased in our eyes when we remember that Savonarola succeeded in communicating his enthusiasm to a people apparently converted to scepticism by the leaders of the new learning. He was the first to foresee and foretell that this new love and ecstasy would take possession of the multitude, and, by rousing religious feeling, help to regenerate the world.

His "Book of the Widowed Life,"[1] published as early as 1491, consists of sound moral advice to widows.

[1] "Libro della vita viduale," Firenze, issued by Ser Francesco Bonaccorsi, 1491. It is a pamphlet of thirty leaves. Audin cites three other fifteenth century editions. Two undated, and one issued by Ser Lorenzo Morgiani, 26th November, 1496.

This treatise serves to disprove the assertions of those who represented Savonarola as a foe to matrimony, and almost accused him of intending to subject all Florence to monastic rules of life, whereas the doctrines inculcated by him with regard to marriage were full of good sense. "Widows," he says, "like unto orphans, are under the special protection of the Lord. The most fitting life for them would be to renounce the world, give themselves wholly to God, and become 'even as the dove, which is a chaste creature, and therefore, having lost its mate, never couples with another, but spends the rest of its life in lonely lamentation.' Nevertheless, if for the education of her children, or through poverty, or from being unable to resist the longings of the flesh, the widow should wish to take a second husband, let her do so; that is better than being surrounded by adorers, and thus exposed to calumny and dangers innumerable. If a widow be reluctant to preserve the strict decorum and difficult reserve due to her position, rather let her return to the dignified marriage state. But let those conscious of greater strength and of a spirit suited to their condition become models for all other women. The worthy widow should wear robes of mourning; live alone, and avoid the company of men; be gravity itself, and so austere in her bearing that no one may dare to address to her a word or smile of disrespect. And, forasmuch as the life of this widow will be a continual lesson to other women, it will be needless for her to strive to speak counsel to others. Let her give no advice save when absolutely required, and seek only to give it to her children or grandchildren. It is unbecoming to a widow's gravity to pry into the life or backslidings of others; it is unbecoming for her to be, or even appear to be vain; nor let her, to save others, forget what is due to herself."

By means of these pamphlets, and a few more of nearly the same kind, which he published from time to time,[1] Savonarola obtained his intent; for he rose daily higher in the estimation of the learned and the affection of the people. But although in his philosophy he steadily followed the dictates of natural reason, and his religious writings gave free vent to the spontaneous feelings of his soul, yet all this seemed to him insufficient to bring conviction to the minds of men accustomed to be guided by authority. It is true that he was often so dominated and carried away by his own ideas that he was content to assert them as undeniable truths; and in the transports of his devotion, believing himself favoured with direct communications from God, felt no need of offering any proof of his visions and prophecies. Nevertheless, when it was a question of convincing others, silencing the conceit and importunity of the learned, or of winning general belief for extraordinary things, the authority of a book was indispensable in that age. But what authority could he accept save that of the Holy Scriptures,[2] the only book in which he had faith? Who would dare to resist the word of the Lord? The Bible had been the surest guide of his youth, the consoler of his griefs; it had educated and formed his mind. There was no verse in it that he had not committed to memory, no page that he had not commented, and from which he had not derived some idea for his sermons. By force of study and meditation he had ceased to regard the Bible as a book. It was a world, a living, speaking, infinite world, in which the past, present, and future were all revealed to him. He could not open the Holy Scriptures without feeling exalted by the thought of reading the Word of God, and he discerned in it the microcosm, as it were, of the whole universe, the allegory of the whole history of the human race. It was a study that continually fed upon itself; therefore he covered the margins of the sacred volume with interminable notes of passing ideas, and many different readings of every passage.

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[1] Savonarola must have also published at this time his "Confessionale," or "Introductorium Confessorum," of which there is an edition undated, apparently of the fifteenth century. It served as a guide to confessors, and especially to those of the convent, and touches no individual note. It was frequently reprinted, with certain changes and additions, in the course of the sixteenth century, and was very generally used.

[2] At the beginning of the Bible, containing marginal notes in Savonarola's hand, in the National Library of Florence, we find the following note: "Conemur ita Scripturas exponere, ut ab infidelibus non irrideamur," after the title, "Summarium Librorum Sacre Scripture in Biblia comprehensi." The real meaning of his note was plainly this: My visions come directly from God, and would therefore stand in no need of proof, were the men of to-day less incredulous. These private reflections, written by Savonarola for his own use, are naturally of the greatest value to us.

It is only by examination of the sermons that we can realize the varied use that Savonarola made of the Bible. However, to give the reader some idea of it, we may say that, besides literal interpretation of the text, he was accustomed to arrange the reading of every passage under four heads: the *spiritual*, *moral*, *allegorical*, and *anagogical*. As an explanation of his method, let us take, for instance, the first verse of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The spiritual meaning refers to the spirit, hence heaven and earth signify soul and body. The moral meaning, on the other hand, refers to morality, hence heaven and earth signify reason and instinct. The allegorical meaning is double, referring both to the Hebrew and to the Christian Church: in the first case heaven and earth represent Adam and Eve; the sun and the moon signifying the high priest and the king of the Hebrew people: in the second case heaven and earth signify the chosen people, and the people of the Gentiles, the Pope, and the Emperor. The anagogical meaning refers to the Church triumphant, hence heaven and earth, the sun, moon, and stars signify the angels, men, Jesus Christ, the Virgin, the saints, and so forth.[1]

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[1] See note at the end of the chapter.

In this manner Savonarola found confirmation in the Bible for every thought, inspiration, and prophecy that he imagined and for all he beheld.

There was nothing, whether great or small, public or private, sacred or profane, of which he did not find some proof in the Bible. Nevertheless, he recommended that great caution should be exercised in making these interpretations. In one of his marginal notes we find these words: "It is necessary to be acquainted with languages and history, to continually read and have long familiarity (with the Bible); it is necessary to be careful not to run counter to reason, nor the received opinions of the Church[1] and the learned. We must not turn the Bible to our own ends, for by so doing the human intellect would usurp the place of the Divine Word.[2] Who then shall guide the faithful through this sea of peril, and teach him to thread this labyrinth to which the human intellect hath no clue? Divine grace shall be his guide. Therefore let the faithful prepare himself to read the Bible by great purity of heart, by long practice of charity, by raising his thoughts above earthly things; for we may not comprehend this book by the intellect alone, but must also bring our heart and soul to the task. Thus only can we enter without peril into this infinite world of the Holy Scriptures, and obtain the light needed for our salvation. But not unto all is this gift equally granted. From time to time God sends upon earth men favoured with a stronger light than others, and it is their part to enlighten the darkened minds of the multitude. Such are the doctors of the Church, to whom the Lord often speaks in the spirit, revealing hidden things to them by direct communication, so that they may guide and enlighten the faithful." [1]

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[1] "Ad caritatem, familiaritatemque Christi non pervenerit quisquis Sacre Scripture delitiis abundare non contendit.

"In exponendis Scripturis semper queramus verum sensum auctoris videlicet literalem primo, et ubi sunt plures sensus, eum maxime sequamur, quem plures gravioresque sequunter, *presertim quando sequitur cum Ecclesia Romana: non spernentes tamen expositiones contrarias aliorum Sanctorum.*" . . .

"Circa ea que ad fidem pertinent, quædam sunt de substantia, ut articuli, et circa hec non licet contrarium opinari. Quædam non sunt de substantia, ut diversa doctorum expositiones; et circa hec contingit opinari contraria."

Some of these notes are very beautiful, and prove the independent spirit of their author; but others are only proofs of his mental excitement and unbalanced fancy. We have only quoted a few of the passages bearing on our theme. These also are at the beginning of the Bible in the National Library, directly after the "Summarium" quoted above.

[2] He seemed to fear lest he should be guilty of this himself, for we find many notes in which he warns himself to take heed, as in some of those we have quoted above, and as may be seen by the following: "Cave ne voluntas precedat intellectum, aut etiam intellectus tuus intellectum Dei in Scriptura, ut velis ipsam exponere sicut prius concepisti, et tuo sensui aptare; sed potius eius intellectui te ipsum accommoda, ut super dicit Hilarius."

We find a similar thought expressed again further on: "Ne etiam ab infidelibus irrideamur: et falsa pro veris sumamus et asseramus, non debemus Scripturam exponere contra philosophiam naturalem veram.

But, in spite of all these precautions, Savonarola was nearing the brink of a precipice from which it was difficult to avoid falling. With so varied and flexible a method of interpretation, there was nothing that could not be supported on the authority of Holy Writ; and whenever he should let himself be carried away by his imagination, the Scriptures, instead of acting as a check, would only urge him to wilder flights. In fact, whenever his excited fancy evoked strange visions of futurity; whenever he heard voices of sinister omen in the air threatening chastisement to Italy and the Church, he always found this confirmed in some page of the Bible; and the greater his good faith and sincerity the more strongly was he convinced of the truth

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Si enim Deus doceret aliud per lumen naturale, aliud contrarium per lumen supernaturale, aut dicerent homines, eum decipere, aut errare. Ergo Scriptura est secundum philosophiam veram, quia verum vero consonat."

[1] *Vide* the same marginal notes in Savonarola's Bible.

of these signs. Nor must we forget that he was encouraged in his system of interpretation by the example of the Neo-Platonist philosopher, Ficino, who was accustomed to interpret the classics on a no less varied nor less arbitrary plan. The traditions and learning of the age, together with his own temperament, combined, therefore, to urge Savonarola irresistibly forward on his dangerous path. But we shall have occasion later to speak of this subject at greater length.

NOTE TO CHAPTER VII.

On the Biblical Exegesis of Savonarola, and on certain copies of the Bible annotated by his hand.

We shall now give a specimen of Savonarola's various modes of interpreting the Bible, applied to the beginning of Genesis. This specimen is derived from the marginal notes written in Savonarola's hand in two Bibles, one of which is in the National Library, and the other in the Riccardian Library of Florence. From the first and more important of the two we have frequently quoted: it was printed at Basle, 1491, and contains a greater number of notes, besides many dissertations or tractates added at the end. Notes and tractates are alike written in a close, neat hand, and so minutely, and with so many abbreviations, as to be illegible without much study and the occasional use of a microscope. A very exact transcription of them was made by Signor Bencini, of the National Library; and the copy in our own possession forms two stout folio volumes of manuscript. The Riccardi Bible (Venice, 1492) contains fewer and more legible notes and no tractates. The interpretations given are always made on the system we have described. They contain remarks on history and geography, and give the meaning of certain Greek or Hebrew words, from which literal, moral, mystic, allegorical, and anagogical interpretations are derived. It should, however, be remarked that Savonarola, unlike the champions of Reform, seldom raises any purely theological questions in his notes; on the contrary, we constantly find that the passages upon which the Reformers afterwards based most of their controversies are left without comment. But we shall have occasion to recur to this elsewhere. For the moment we need only observe, that Savonarola's chief object in making these notes was for future use in his sermons and devotional writings. The notes frequently cover all the margins, are inserted between the printed lines, and even continued on added leaves.

By placing the National Library Bible, containing the rules for the various modes of interpretation, side by side with the Riccardian copy, in which there is a wider application of these rules to the first chapters of Genesis, we have been enabled to construct the following table. Other and more minute particulars and examples may be found *ad infinitum* in the above-mentioned Bibles, and also in many of Savonarola's sermons; as, for instance, in No. XXIII. of the series on the Psalm *Quam bonus*.

The reader will be able to form some idea of the manuscript compositions contained in the National Library Bible, in addition to the marginal notes, from the following list of the greater part of them, with their respective titles. As some indication of their bulk, we also note the number of pages occupied by them in our copy:—

"Benedicit nos Deus," &c., pp. 1–2. "In Purificazione: Civitatem adhortaturus ad rectam in Deum intentionem, et mutuam unionem" (this and the preceding are notes for sermons), pp. 2–5. "Cantica Canticorum," pp. 6–44. "Moralitas super 16th Ezechielis," pp. 45–54. "Habacuc" (a complete exposition of that prophet), pp. 54–99. "Circumferatur Arca" (notes for five sermons), pp. 100–107. "In Assumptione," pp. 112–132. Then (pp. 133–247) follow numerous summaries, and notes of different kinds, almost all for sermons, of which the last is addressed *Ad Dominos*, *i.e.*, to the Signory.

We should also remark that there are two ancient parchment Bibles in the Convent of St. Mark, containing numerous marginal notes in a very minute hand somewhat resembling that of Savonarola. This resemblance notwithstanding, and although the words, "*utebatur Hieronymus Savonarola*," were found inscribed on a leaf of one of these Bibles, the notes are certainly not his. We may also add that in the catalogue, "De operibus viri Dei, non impressis," no other Bibles annotated by Savonarola are mentioned, save the following: "Biblie tres glossate ab ipso. Prima, apud Ferrariam, in conventu Angelorum; secunda, Florentia, apud Fratrem Nicholaum di Biliottis; tertia, Florentia, apud Marcum Simonis de Nigro." It is improbable that the author of this catalogue, who was a friar of St. Mark's, and so careful in noting down his master's manuscript works, should have been unacquainted with Bibles actually contained in the convent while acquainted with those then in the possession of private individuals. Neither are the parchment Bibles in question mentioned in any of the old biographies.

TABLE OF SAVONAROLA'S VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF THE BIBLE, DERIVED FROM HIS AUTOGRAPH NOTES.

LITERAL INTERPRETATION.	SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION.	ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION (with reference to the *Old Testament*).	ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION (with reference to the *New Testament*).	MORAL INTERPRETATION.	ANAGOGICAL INTERPRETATION.
First Day.—Heaven, Earth, Light.	Soul, Body. Acting Intelligence.	Adam, Eve, Lights of Grace.	Hebrew People, Gentiles, Jesus Christ.	Soul, Body (in the sense of Reason and Instinct), Light of Grace.	Angels, Men, Vision of God.
Second Day.—The Firmament.	The Will struggling between the Soul and the Body.	Noah's Ark.	The Apostles and Other Saints.	Moral Strength.	Eternal Bliss and Eternal Perdition.
Third Day.—Division of the Waters from the Earth. Dry Places. Grasses and Plants.	The Movement of the Passions and of the Errors possessing the Intellect. The Intellect Craving for Knowledge.	Gentiles separated from the Chosen People. Multitude of the Elect.	Tribulations Separating Many from the Church. The Sound Doctrines of the Church.	Struggle of the Passions against Duty. Reason.	Joy of the Blessed when Freed from Tribulation. Their Praises and Perfect Works.
Fourth Day.—Sun, Moon, Stars.	Metaphysics and Ethics, Natural Science and Logical Science.	High Priest, King, Other Priests.	Pope, Emperor, Doctors.	The Law of Charity, old and new, Minor Precepts.	Christ, The Virgin. The other Blessed.
Fifth Day.—Birds, Fishes.	Contemplation of Higher and of Lower Things.	Maccabees (who always wavered).	Contemplative Life, Active Life.	Contemplation of Things Divine, and of Things Human, to the Benefit of Active and of Contemplative Life.	Angels and Men admitted into the Angelic Choir.
Sixth Day.—Beasts. Land Animals. Beasts of Burden. Man in the Image of God.	Fierce Appetites. Sense, both Inner and Outer. Man, with Control of the Passions.	The Hebrew People (given to Avarice in the time of Christ). The Good. Christ (the expected of the Old Testament).	Antichrist with his Followers. Christians given up to Earthly Things. The Chosen. The Perfect, who will abound in the time of the Antichrist.	The Wicked. Persecutors. He who Becomes Perfect by Tribulation.	Those who were Persecutors. Preachers.

N.B.—It should be observed that, although the second and fifth interpretations—*i.e.*, the spiritual and moral—sometimes appear identical, they must, however, be always understood in two different senses: for instance, in one case *reason* signifies the faculty by which truth is comprehended; and, in the other, signifies the force that controls the passions. Besides, this Table is necessarily imperfect, being drawn up from rough notes, which are often barely traced.

CHAPTER VIII.

SAVONAROLA PREACHES ON THE GOSPELS IN THE CATHEDRAL — HE SHOWS HIS AVERSION TO LORENZO THE MAGNIFICENT—HE PREACHES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

(1491.)

THE Florentines thronged in greater crowds to St. Mark's, until the church could no longer contain them; wherefore, in the Lent of 1491, Savonarola preached in the Duomo, and his voice echoed for the first time within the walls of Santa Maria del Fiore. From that moment he would seem to have become paramount in the pulpit, and master of the people, who flocked to hear him in increasing numbers, and with redoubled enthusiasm. The Friar's imagery enchanted the popular fancy; his threats of coming chastisement had a magical effect upon the minds of all, for it truly seemed that all were already oppressed by evil presentiments. His recently published writings likewise assured his influence over distinguished men who had hitherto stood hesitatingly aloof, but this did not prevent him from condemning, in the plainest and most decided terms, the scepticism and corruption of the most celebrated *literati* of the time.[1]

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[1] An autograph codex, in the Library of St. Mark, and of which we shall have more to say hereafter, contains summaries of these Lenten sermons.

All this naturally caused much annoyance to Lorenzo de' Medici, and roused the hostility of his friends. Savonarola began to reflect whether it might not be advisable, for the moment, to cease all mention of visions, revelations, or threats of coming ills, and confine himself to precepts of morality and religion. But he soon realized that it was easier to make this change in theory than in practice. His "Compendium of Revelations" gives us an account of his inward struggles during the second week in Lent. "All that withdrew me from my principal study became quickly distasteful, and whenever I sought to enter on another path, I became instantly hateful to myself. And I remember, when I was preaching in the Duomo in 1491,[1] and had already composed my sermon upon these visions, I determined to omit all mention of them, and never recur to the subject again. God is my witness how I watched and prayed the whole of Saturday and throughout the night; but all other ways, all doctrines save this, were denied me. Towards break of dawn, being weary and dejected by my long vigil, I heard, as I prayed, a voice saying to me: 'Fool, dost thou not see that it is God's will thou shouldst continue in the same path?' Wherefore I preached [2] that day a terrible sermon, *terrificam prædicationem egi*." [3]

Of this sermon we have lately discovered an autograph summary, which, although very incomplete, affords a sufficiently clear idea of the whole. It contains a vehement denunciation of the clergy, whom Savonarola declared

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At sheet 54 we find this passage: "Quidam exponunt cantica de amasiis, &c. Quidam Scripturas dicunt esse artem poeticam, &c. Quidam cantant versus Loysi Pulici, &c.' Quidam habent Biblias in vulgari errantes. Quidam volunt eas corrigere ut grammatici, &c."

[1] In the original 1490; but we have adopted the common style of reckoning.

[2] *I.e.*, the second Sunday in Lent, falling on the last day of February, as may be seen in the above-quoted manuscript.

[3] "Compendium Revelationum," Quétif edition, pp. 277-8.

to be devoured by greed of gold, and given up to outer ceremonies of which they made a traffic, while neglecting the inner life of the spirit. "Fathers make sacrifice to this false idol, urging their sons to enter the ecclesiastical life, in order to obtain benefices and prebends; and thus ye hear it said: *Blessed the house that owns a fat cure.* But I say unto ye: A time will come when rather it will be said: Woe to that house; and ye will feel the edge of the sword upon you. Do as I bid ye; rather let your sons follow the way of all others, than undertake the religious life for gain. In these days there is no grace, no gift of the Holy Spirit that may not be bought and sold. On the other hand, the poor are oppressed by grievous burdens, and when they are called to pay sums beyond their means, the rich cry unto them, Give me the rest. There be some who, having but an income of fifty, pay a tax of one hundred, while the rich pay little, since the taxes are imposed at their pleasure. When widows come weeping, they are bidden to go to sleep. When the poor complain, they are told to pay and pay again."

He then went on to speak of the corruption of manners, and wound up by saying: "Bethink ye well, O ye rich, for affliction shall smite ye. This city shall no more be called Florence, but a den of thieves, of turpitude and bloodshed. Then shall ye all be poverty-stricken, all wretched, and your name, O priests, shall be changed into a terror. I sought no longer to speak in Thy name, O Lord; but Thou hast overpowered me, hast conquered me. Thy word has become like unto a fire within me, consuming the very marrow of my bones. Therefore am I derided and despised of the people. But I cry unto the Lord day and night, and I say unto ye: Know that unheard of times are at hand."

"When Jesus came to redeem the world He found hearers in Judæa alone, and even there the faithful were few.

But He called them to Him on the Mount, and afterwards, by their means, transformed the human race. Ye forsake me, ye deride me, yet shall I gain a few disciples, who will give up all for Christ's sake. They will ask neither benefices nor prebends; will accept neither gifts nor alms, but only their daily bread. They will dress like the poor; they will not seek the great; they will not run after the magistrates in the palace; they will not build houses; they will not visit women daily, to carry them images and rosaries. They will be truthful; they will climb the mount of faith; they will have revelations from heaven and much learning, not, however, the learning of Scotus or the poets, but that of their own conscience and of Holy Writ. They will expound no more their visions until all shall be filled with the glory of God. Then ye shall comprehend that which I say to ye. Now ye cannot comprehend. Wherefore it behoves ye to pray the Lord that He give ye enlightenment. That is your sole need."[1]

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[1] In the Museum of St. Mark, in the very cell once inhabited by Savonarola, is now preserved the precious autograph codex from which we have quoted. It is marked E. 5, 10, 76, came from the Palatine Library, and contains summaries in Latin of a great number of Savonarola's sermons, including (at sheets 53–71) those preached during Lent in 1491. To these a contemporary hand, but not that of Savonarola, has affixed the date 1489, which would signify, according to the common style of reckoning, the year 1490. But as we learn from the manuscript, the sermon was preached *Annuntiatione dominica*, that is to say, on the 25th of March, on a Friday, therefore Easter Day must have fallen on the 3rd of April. Now Easter Day fell on the 3rd of April in the years 1485, 1491, and 1496. It could not have been preached in the latter, for that was a Leap Year, and Annunciation Day then fell on Thursday instead of Friday. In 1485 Savonarola was Lenten preacher at San Gimignano; we may therefore take it for granted that his Lenten sermons on the Gospels were preached in 1491. These observations were suggested by Signor Gherardi, and we concur in their justice. We were also able to verify them in another fashion. We found that the sermon for the second Sunday in Lent was precisely the one so minutely described by Savonarola in his "Compendium of Revelations," where he also states that it was preached in the Lent of 1490 (1491 common style). He has noted in his own hand on the margin of the manuscript: "Deinde dixi qualiter fui coactus hec predicare, quia nihil aliud per totam noctem invigilem

From this sermon we may glean some idea of the whole Lenten series of 1491, although the autograph notes of the rest are not only rough and fragmentary, but often almost unintelligible. But we know that Savonarola achieved extraordinary success by them, not, however, without exciting the lively disapprobation of many who felt themselves to be the objects of his attacks. On March 10, 1491, he wrote to Frà Domenico da Pescia, who was then preaching at Pisa, and already one of the most devoted of his followers: "Our work goes on well, for God helps us marvellously, although the chief men of the city are against us, and many fear that we may meet with the fate of Frà Bernardino.[1] But I have faith in the Lord; He gives me daily greater courage and perseverance, and I preach the regeneration of the Church, taking the Scriptures as my sole guide. Be of good cheer and return quickly, that I may tell ye the marvellous deeds of the Lord."[2]

Further proofs of the signal success of these Lenten discourses are afforded, not only by the testimony of the biographers, but by the remarkable fact that, in spite of his visions, threats, and allusions, and all the murmurs they aroused, Savonarola was invited to the palace by the Signory, and delivered a sermon there on the fourth day of Easter (April 6th). "I am here in the waters of Tiberias," he said. "In the presence of the Signory I do not feel master of myself as in church. Therefore am I constrained to be more measured and urbane, even as

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potuit mihi occurrere." These are almost the identical words used in the "Compendium." There is a very incomplete summary of this sermon at sheet 57 of the Codex. *Vide* Appendix of the Italian edition, Doc. vii.

[1] Frà Bernardino da Montefeltro, a Franciscan monk, who, having preached against usury in Florence, and recommended the institution of a Monte di Pietà, was exiled in the time of Piero de' Medici.

[2] This letter was first published by Padre Marchese in an old Italian translation. Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," p. 178) brought it out in the original Latin.

Christ in the house of the Pharisee. I must tell you, then, that all the evil and all the good of the city depend from its head, and therefore great is his responsibility even for small sins, since, if he followed the right path, the whole city would be sanctified. We therefore must fish in this sea with nets that can hold the smallest fish, nor must we employ overmuch caution, but, on the contrary, speak frankly and openly. Tyrants are incorrigible because they are proud, because they love flattery, and because they will not restore ill-gotten gains. They leave all in the hands of bad ministers; they succumb to flattery; they hearken not unto the poor, and neither do they condemn the rich; they expect the poor and the peasantry to work for them without reward, or suffer their ministers to expect this; they corrupt voters, and farm out the taxes to aggravate the burdens of the people. Ye must therefore remove dissensions, do justice, and exact honesty from all."[1]

How displeasing this language must have been to Lorenzo, may be easily imagined by all. He was already styled a tyrant by many, and universally charged with having corrupted the magistrates, and appropriated public and private funds. Therefore it was plain that the Friar had dared to make allusion to him. Nevertheless this audacity served to increase Savonarola's fame, and in the July of 1491 he was elected Prior of St. Mark's. This new office, while raising him to a more prominent position, also gave him greater independence. He at once refused to conform to an abuse that had been introduced in the convent, namely, that the new Prior must go to pay his respects, and as it were do homage to the Magnificent. "I consider that my election is owed to God alone," he said, "and to Him alone will I vow obedience." Lorenzo was deeply offended by this, and exclaimed, "You see! a stranger has come into *my house*, yet he will not stoop to pay me a visit."[1] Nevertheless, being reluctant to wage war with the Prior of a convent, or attach too much importance to a monk, he sought to win him over by kindness. He went several times to hear mass in St. Mark's, and afterwards walked in the garden; but Savonarola could not be persuaded to leave his studies, in order to bear him company. When the friars ran to tell him of Lorenzo's presence, he replied: "If he does not ask for me, let him go or stay at his pleasure." He was very severe in his judgment of Lorenzo's character; and knowing the harm wrought on public morals by the prince, had no wish to approach a tyrant whom he regarded, not only as the foe and destroyer of freedom, but as the chief obstacle to the restoration of Christian life among the people. Lorenzo then began to send rich gifts, and generous alms to the convent. But this naturally increased Savonarola's previous contempt for his character. And he alluded to the circumstance in the pulpit, when saying that a faithful dog does not leave off barking in his master's defence, because a bone is thrown to him. Nevertheless, soon after this, he found a large sum of money in gold in the convent alms' box, and, persuaded that Lorenzo was the donor, immediately sent it all to the congregation of the good men of St. Martin, for distribution among the poor, saying that silver and copper sufficed for the needs of his brethren. Thus, as Burlamacchi remarks, "Lorenzo was at last convinced that this was not the right soil in which to plant vines."[2]

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[1] A summary of this sermon, but as incomplete as the other summaries, is to be found at sheet 71 of the codex before quoted. *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition.

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[1] Burlamacchi, p. 20 and fol.; "Biographia Latina," at sheet 7; Pico, p. 23.

[2] Burlamacchi, p. 21. The "Biografia Latina," at sheet 7, says that Pietro da Bibbiena, the bearer of the money, when informing Lorenzo what Savonarola had done with it, added: *Vulpecula ista habet caudam depilatam.*

But Lorenzo refused to be checked by this rebuff, and presently sent five of the weightiest citizens in Florence[1] to Savonarola in order to persuade him to change his behaviour and manner of preaching by pointing out the dangers he was incurring for himself and his convent. But Savonarola soon cut short their homily, by saying: "I know that you have not come of your own will, but at that of Lorenzo. Bid him to do penance for his sins, for the Lord is no respecter of persons, and spares not the princes of the earth." And when the five citizens hinted that he might be sent into exile, he added: "I fear not sentences of banishment, for this city of yours is like a mustard seed on the earth. But the new doctrine shall triumph, and the old shall fall. Although I be a stranger, and Lorenzo a citizen, and indeed the first in the city, I shall stay while he will depart." He then spoke in such wise on the state of Florence and Italy, that his hearers were amazed by his knowledge of public affairs. It was then that he predicted before many witnesses, in the Sacristy of St. Mark, that great changes would befall Italy, and that the Magnificent, the Pope, and the King of Naples were all near unto death.[2]

Savonarola was extremely tenacious of his independence as an ecclesiastic, and therefore resolutely refused to yield on any point. His mystic exaltation daily increased and was more freely displayed in his sermons to the brotherhood. It was then that he indulged in metaphorical utterances and fiery exhortations on the duty of despising carnal things and cultivating the joys of the soul. By opening his whole heart to his brethren, he gained entire mastery over them. One day he said to them : "It is now twenty-seven months since I began to preach on the Apocalypse in this place, that is *nova dicere*, *novo modo*. Afterwards, being upon a hill, I looked down thence upon a fortified city, which suddenly, as from an earthquake, began to totter and fall. Its inhabitants were quarrelling among themselves. And I bethought me : This city cannot have good foundations, nor its citizens charity. I then went down into the valley, and beheld that there were caverns beneath the houses. I began instantly to build a new city on the plain, asking help from the men ; but instead of aiding in the work, some carried off the stones, while others jeered at me, and shot arrows at me from the old walls. Therefore, I would have withdrawn in despair, but the Lord commanded me to persevere." He then explained that the arrows signified the false teachings of the doctors, who with the string of false knowledge and ill-will bent the bow of righteousness. And the new city was the spiritual life, assailed by worldly men.

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[1] They were: Domenico Bonsi, Guidantonio Vespucci, Paolo Antonio Soderini, Bernardo Rucellai, and Francesco Valori. It is to be noted that almost all of them afterwards became partisans of Savonarola, and the last of the five was indeed the most zealous of his lay followers.

[2] These facts are related in the "Biografia Latina" at sheet 7; Cinozzi's "Epistola"; Burlamacchi, p. 20 and fol.; Pico, chap. vi.; and also in the Letter of G. Benivieni to Clement VII., published at the end of Varchi's "Storia," Le Monnier edition of 1857–58. They are also mentioned by Frà Benedetto in the "Secunda Parte delle Profezie dello inclito Martire del Signore, Hieronimo Savonarola," to be found in the National Library of Florence: Rinuccini Codex, II. 8, 123. Among the illuminations in this Codex is a portrait of Savonarola presumably by Frà Benedetto. The first part of this work, bearing the general title of "Nuova Jerusalem," seems to have perished.

"Wherefore pray ye in the spirit," he continued, "so that the Lord may grant ye victory, and persevere, that He may free ye from your many perils." It is easy to lead men to the outer life, to mass, to confession ; but hard to guide them to the inner life and dispose them to grace. It is necessary to shun too many ceremonies. *Oportet viros se ab omni opere exteriori alienare.* These ceremonies are not essential, inasmuch as they vary in different times and places. The ancients lived well without them. Now, by many ceremonies all is converted into shame and gain, as is proved by the universal greed for benefices. Besides, by its effects is the cause known, and your city having no charity cannot have strong foundations. Pray ye then in a fervent spirit, so that the Lord may give victory to the new doctrine. Run not after false knowledge, but examine all things by the light of the Scriptures.[1]

An extraordinary effect was produced on the corrupt and pagan society of Florence by these fervent outbursts of strange, daring and exalted mysticism, which the preacher so suddenly hurled in their midst. Lorenzo fully understood the gravity of the situation; and although reluctant to hazard extreme measures, had no intention of yielding to what he held to be an audacious aggression. Accordingly, in order to weaken the new orator's growing influence over the people, he persuaded Frà Mariano da Genazzano to resume his sermons, and specially charged him to attack the presumption of uttering prophecies of future events. Frà Mariano had all the impetuosity, hypocrisy, and malice of a courtier-pedant, and although much of his eloquence as a preacher consisted of exaggerated gesticulations, groans and tears, yet he had some reputation for learning, and was in great favour with the creatures of Lorenzo, whom he always flattered from the pulpit.

Up to this time he had always feigned to be Savonarola's friend, and had congratulated him on his fortunate success. But when charged to attack him, he instantly and eagerly accepted the task. On Ascension Day he was to preach in his own convent and church at San Gallo, and take for his text: *Non est vestrum nosse tempora vel momenta* (Acts i. 7). The announcement of this sermon caused great excitement in Florence, and the preacher had a very numerous congregation. All the leading citizens were present: among them Placido Cinozzi, afterwards a friar of St Mark's, and Savonarola's biographer; Pico della Mirandola, at that time one of Mariano's admirers; Poliziano and even Lorenzo de' Medici, who came to enhance by his presence the effect of the crushing defeat he hoped to see inflicted on the Prior of St. Mark's. But Frà Mariano was betrayed by his own zeal. He began by hurling all manner of accusations against Savonarola, styling him a false prophet, a vain disseminator of scandal and disorder among the people, and this with so much insolence and coarseness of language as to disgust all his hearers. Thus in a single day his reputation suffered more than it had gained by the labours of many years. Indeed, from that moment Cinozzi and Pico forsook Mariano, in order to attend the sermons of Savonarola, whose admirers and disciples they subsequently became. Even Poliziano was greatly shocked, and Lorenzo felt very humiliated and not a little uneasy.

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[1] This sermon is given almost in full at sheet 137 and fol. of the previously quoted holograph codex in St. Mark's Library. *Vide* Appendix (of Italian edition), Doc. ix.

Thus the threatened discomfiture of the Prior of St. Mark's was converted into a triumph. The following Sunday he chose the same verse of the Bible for his text, interpreting it to the advantage of his own doctrines, and refuting the charges and accusations of the man who, at a moment's notice, had changed from a seeming friend to a declared enemy.[1] The Prior was now master of the field, for Mariano did not dare to continue his sermons. Indeed the latter, resuming his old part, feigned indifference, and invited Savonarola to his convent, where they performed high mass together, and exchanged numerous courtesies. Nevertheless, the Augustine was cut to the soul by the humiliation of defeat. To have been once esteemed the finest preacher in Italy, to have almost annihilated his rival, on the latter's first coming to Florence, and to be now beaten and vanquished in the sight of all, was not a blow to be borne without rancour. And from that moment he cherished the deepest hatred for Savonarola; vowed eternal vengeance, was indefatigable in raising fresh obtacles and enemies in his path, and finally succeeded in becoming one of the principal agents of his fall.

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[1] "Biografia Latina," at sheet 8; Cinozzi, "Epistola," &c.; Burlamacchi, p. 23 and fol.

Lorenzo now recognized that he had totally failed in his intent. He was already suffering from the attacks of the disease that was soon to have a fatal termination, and weary of combating a man for whom, in despite of himself, he felt a growing esteem, no longer attempted to interfere with his preaching. Nor did Savonarola abuse the privilege.

So far, our only knowledge of his sermons has been gleaned from his rough preliminary notes. The first to be printed were those on "The First Epistle of St. John," which cannot have been delivered before the year 1491. These must now be examined for the sake of a closer acquaintance with the character of his eloquence. It is certainly an arduous task to give a detailed account of a collection of sermons, without unity of subject or links of connection. And, as the difficulty is increased by the somewhat disordered nature of the mind and studies of Savonarola, it will be understood how very difficult it is to establish the starting-point and goal of our analysis.

The preacher always takes a verse of the Bible for his text, grouping around it—according to the system of interpretation that we have described—all the ideas, theological, political, and moral, occurring to his mind, and always quoting other passages of the Bible in their support. In this way a heterogeneous mass of raw material is built up, by which the reader is almost overwhelmed. Suddenly, however, Savonarola shakes off his fetters and thrusts every obstacle aside: his discourse has touched on some point of vital interest both to himself and his audience; his fancy is fired; colossal images present themselves to his mind; his voice swells; his gestures are more animated; his eyes seem to flame; his originality is suddenly asserted; he is a great and powerful orator! But, all too soon, he returns to his artificial world of ill-connected, ill-digested ideas, again issues from it and is again involved in it, without ever leaving it entirely behind, but also without ever being entirely enslaved by it. Thus no one can carefully read and examine these sermons without being forced to confess that Savonarola was a born orator. Yet, being ignorant of the rules of oratory, it was only when his subject took full possession of him, and natural gifts supplied the place of art, that he could attain to real eloquence. Nevertheless, if we compare him with his most renowned contemporaries, such as Frà Paolo Attavanti and Frà Roberto da Lecce, who either remained lost in the mazes of scholastic rhetoric, or stooped to depths of scurrility altogether unbefitting the pulpit, then indeed Savonarola stands forth a giant even at his worst moments. And, in truth, on patient examination of his sermons, we find an immense quantity of secondary ideas and details of observation scattered through them which redound to his merit as a thinker, even when diminishing his worth as an orator.

All this is abundantly exemplified in the series of sermons to which we have alluded, on the First Epistle of St. John, probably delivered on the Sundays of 1491. The orator gives a lengthy exposition in them of the mysteries of Mass, together with very useful precepts and directions for the popular observance of religion. A minute report of the order in which they are arranged, and of all the subjects touched upon, would give so imperfect a notion of the whole, that it will be more to the purpose to select a few representative thoughts and passages. Among the many occurring to us for quotation, there are some concerning *the word of life*, a theme on which the orator always loved to dwell. His thoughts may appear somewhat artificial and unimportant at the present day, but when we remember what were the theological studies, what was the religious training of his age, we shall see that they prove no little originality of mind, and that Savonarola must have possessed an unusual amount of intellectual vigour.

He treats the subject in the following manner:—"A human word is formed in separate and different ways by a succession of syllables, and therefore when one part of a word is pronounced, the others cease to exist; when the whole word has been uttered, it too ceases to exist. But the Divine Word is not divided into parts; it issues united in its whole essence; is diffused throughout the created world, living and enduring in all eternity, even as the heavenly light of which it is the companion. Wherefore it is *the word of life*, or rather is *the life*, and is one with the Father. It is true that we accept this word in various senses; sometimes by life we mean the state of being of living men, sometimes we regard it as meaning the occupation of living men: wherefore we say, The life of this man is knowledge, the life of the bird is song. But, truly, there is but one life, and it is God, since in Him alone have all things their being. And this is the blessed life that is the end of man, and in which infinite and eternal happiness is found. The earthly life is not only deceptive, but cannot all be enjoyed, inasmuch as it lacks unity. If thou lovest riches, thou must renounce the senses; if thou givest thyself up to the senses, thou must renounce knowledge; and if thou wouldst have knowledge, thou canst not enjoy offices. But the pleasures of the heavenly life may all be enjoyed in the vision of God, which is supreme felicity."[1]

Savonarola expounds these ideas at some length, but more frequently inveighs against the corrupt manners of the age, denouncing in turn every vice that was then prevalent. This, for instance, is how he speaks against gambling: "If you see persons engaged in gambling in these days, believe them to be no Christians, since they are worse than infidels, are ministers of the evil one, and celebrate his rites. They are avaricious men, blasphemers, slanderers, detractors of others' fame, fault-finders, they are hateful to God, are thieves, murderers, and full of all iniquity. I cannot permit ye to share in these amusements; ye must be steadfast in prayer, continually rendering thanks to the Almighty in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. He that gambles shall be accursed, and accursed he that suffers others to gamble; shun ye their conversation, for the father that gambles before his son shall be accursed, and accursed the mother that gambles in her daughter's presence. Therefore, whoever thou art, thou shalt be accursed if thou dost gamble or allow others to gamble; thou shalt be accursed, I tell thee, in the city, accursed in the fields; thy corn shall be accursed; and thy substance; cursed the fruit of thy land and thy body, thy herds of oxen and thy flocks of sheep; cursed shalt thou be in all thy comings and goings."[2]

And in speaking against usury and immoderate gains, he says: "Therefore, owing to avarice, neither ye nor your children lead a good life, and ye have already discovered many devices for gaining money, and many modes of exchange which ye call just, but are most unjust, and ye have likewise corrupted the magistrates and their functions. . . . None can persuade ye that it is sinful to lend at usury, or make unjust bargains ; on the contrary ye defend yourselves to your souls' damnation ; . . . nor does any man take shame to himself for lending at usury, but rather holds them to be fools that refrain from it. And thus by ye is fulfilled the saying of Isaiah : 'They declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not,' and that of Jeremiah, 'Thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.' Thou sayest that the good and happy life consists in gain ; and Christ says, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Thou sayest that the happy life consists in pleasure and voluptuousness ; and Christ says, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.' Thou sayest the happy life consists in glory ; and Christ says, 'Blessed are ye, when men shall revile ye and persecute ye.' The way of life hath been shown to ye, yet none follows it, none seeks it, none learns it. Wherefore Christ laments over ye, for having endured much labour to show ye the way of Life, that all might be saved, He is justly incensed against you ; and hath declared by the mouth of the prophet : 'We are weary with calling, my tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth ; for all day do I cry with the voice of the preachers, and no one hearkens unto me.' "[1]

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[1] "Sermoni sulla I Epistola di San Giovanni." *Vide* Sermons i., iv., v., and vi. *passim*. Our quotation is from the Prato edition of 1846, which is the easiest to obtain, but although this edition has been collated with the holograph MS. belonging to Lord Holland, it is incomplete in some places, and is therefore useless for purposes of study, unless compared with the Venetian editions, of 1547 in Italian, and of 1536 in Latin

[2] Sermon x. p. 93.

At other times Savonarola addresses himself to the hearts of his people, and seeks to lead them to righteousness by rousing their feelings. "Oh ! would that I might persuade ye to turn away from earthly things, and follow after things eternal ! Would God grant this grace to me and to ye, I should assuredly deem myself happy in this life. But this is a gift from God. None may come unto me, sayeth the Lord, unless he be brought by the Father. I cannot enlighten ye inwardly, I can only strike upon your ears; but what may that avail if your intellect be not enlightened, nor your affections kindled?"[1] "And how may this be done, save by the word of God? Labour, then, to comprehend His word, and do with yourselves as with corn, which to be made into flour must first be pounded and ground. Otherwise what would it avail to have full granaries, what to have the treasures of the Holy Spirit unless ye draw out their spiritual meaning? Therefore will I strive to do the work of the Apostles, making the Holy Scriptures known to ye; and to ye it behoves to be doers, and not only hearers of the word of God."[2]

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[1] Sermon v. pp. 49, 50.

But where Savonarola truly surpassed himself, was in expounding the Gospel of the Epiphany; and this sermon was not only full of feeling and imagination, but also constructed with the greatest skill. "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa, in the days of Herod the king, behold there came to Jerusalem wise men from the east, saying: Where is He that is born in Judæa? For we have seen His star in the east, and have come to worship Him with gifts.—Mark the words and observe the mysteries. . . . Behold then that He by whom all things were made is this day born upon earth. Wherefore the beginning of all things (inasmuch as by Him all things were created) is now born, and hath a young virgin for His mother . . . Behold, He who holds the world in His hand, is brought forth of a maid. Behold, He that is above all things begins by having a native land; He begins as the compatriot of men, the companion of men, the brother of men, and the son of man! See how God cometh near unto ye! Seek ye then the Lord, while ye may still find Him; call upon Him while He is yet near. . . . Of a truth this is the bread that comes down from heaven, and gladdens the hearts of angels and of men, so that it may be the common food of men and of angels. . . .

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[1] Sermon vi. p. 52.
[2] Sermon v. pp. 43, 44.

"Hearken then, my brethren, and let not your thoughts go astray. Open your eyes, and behold who are these that are coming. I cry unto ye, O men, and my voice is for the children of men. Behold the Wise men, behold the Chaldeans; behold those that were not born among Christians; behold those that were not baptized; behold those that were not instructed in the law of the gospel; behold those that did not receive the numerous sacraments of the Church; behold those that heard not the voices of preachers. *Behold the Wise Men of the East*, from the midst of a perverse and evil nation, from distant and remote regions; shrinking from no expense, from no weariness, from no danger. *They came.* And when was it that they came? When all the world was full of idolatry; when men bowed down before stocks and stones, when the earth was full of darkness and gloom, and all men full of iniquity. . . . When was it that they came? When Christ was a babe, when He lay upon straw, when He showed nought but weakness, when He had as yet done no miracles. . . . *We beheld His star in the east*, the star that announced His coming. Behold, they saw His star, but no other miracle; they beheld not the blind restored to sight, nor the dead raised, nor any other visible thing. *And we come to worship Him.* We have made a great journey only to worship the footprints of the Babe. If only we may see Him, may adore Him, may touch Him, if only we may lay our gifts before Him, we deem ourselves blessed. We have forsaken our country, have forsaken our families, have forsaken our friends, have forsaken our kingdoms, have forsaken our great riches; we have come from a distant land, through many dangers, and with much speed, and solely to worship Him. This is sufficient for us, this is more to us than our kingdoms, this is more precious to us than our very life. . . . What then shall we say to these things, my brethren? What, by our faith, shall we say? O living faith! O highest charity! See ye then how great was the perfidy of the Judæans, how great the hardness of their hearts, since neither by miracles, nor by prophecies, nor by this voice, were they moved!

"But why have we directed our sermon against the men of Judæa, and not rather against ourselves? . . . Why dost thou see the mote in thy brother's eye, yet cannot see the beam in thine own? Behold, the Lord Jesus is no longer a babe in the manger, but is great in heaven. Already hath He preached and performed miracles, hath been crucified, hath risen again, and now sitteth at the right hand of the Father, hath sent His Holy Spirit down upon the earth, hath sent the apostles, hath subjugated the nations. . . . Already the kingdom of heaven is everywhere; behold, its door is opened unto ye; the Lord hath led the way, and the apostles and martyrs have followed Him. But thou art slothful, and all labour is a burden to thee, and thou wilt not follow the footsteps of Christ. Behold, each day avarice grows, the whirlpool of usury is widened, lust hath contaminated all things, and pride soareth to the clouds. Ye are children of the devil, and ye seek to do the will of your father. Oh! well might it be said of ye, in the words of the Bible—'Behold, I go unto a people which kneweth me not, and called not upon my name; daily have I stretched out my hands to an unbelieving people, which walketh in the way of perdition, a people which provoketh me to anger.'"[1]

This description of the wise men coming from distant lands, and through many perils, to seek the infant Jesus, while Christians remain indifferent to Christ the Man, even when He has risen to the splendour of His glory, and opens His arms invitingly to them, was undoubtedly one of the appeals that acted most magically upon the people; and the whole sermon was one of the best Savonarola ever gave. Natural, spontaneous, heart-stirring eloquence of this kind, was entirely unexampled in that age of pedantic and imitative oratory.[1]

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[1] Sermon xvii. pp. 164–9.

The simple eloquence of the thirteenth century, of which, with all its childishness and ingenuous charm, St. Bernardino of Siena was the last and most famous example, had now long died out. The preachers of the time, as we have before remarked, when not rhetoricians of the Frà Mariano type, indulged in vulgar theatrical displays, or spoke a scholastic jargon that was no longer understood. Accordingly, the secret of Savonarola's enormous success may be entirely attributed to his mystic religious ardour, and to the earnest affection he felt for the people and elicited from them in return. His was the only voice that addressed them in familiar[1] and fascinating tones. He used language that stirred the hearts of the multitude, and spoke of subjects which came home to them. He was the only one who fought sincerely for truth, was fervently devoted to goodness, and deeply commiserated the sufferings of his hearers; accordingly he was the one really eloquent speaker of his age. Since the holy eloquence of the early Christian Fathers and Doctors passed away, no voice had been heard worthy of lasting fame. Frà Girolamo was the first to restore pulpit preaching to its old post of honour, and to give it fresh life, and accordingly he well deserves to be styled the first orator of modern times.

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[1] In the holograph manuscript of Cerretani's "Storia di Firenze," preserved in the National Library of Florence (II., III. 74, sheet 174^t), we find the following remarks on Savonarola's sermons: "He introduced an almost new manner of preaching the Word of God, namely the Apostolic manner, without dividing the sermon into parts, without proposing questions, and shunning cadences and all the devices of eloquence; for his sole aim was to expound some passages of the Old Testament, and introduce the simplicity of the primitive Church." Guicciardini states, in his "Storia Fiorentina," that having read and considered Savonarola's sermons, he found them "to be very eloquent, and with a *natural and spontaneous, not artificial, eloquence*." He adds that for centuries no man had been seen so versed as he in Holy Writ, and that whereas no one had ever succeeded in preaching for more than two Lenten seasons in Florence without the public growing weary of him, Savonarola alone was able to continue preaching for many years, and always rising in the estimation of the people. As we have before remarked, Guicciardini was one of the warmest admirers of Savonarola, and made summaries of all his sermons. The manuscript of these summaries, written in Guicciardini's own hand, was published some years ago by his heirs and descendants. His opinion is the more valuable because he was a constant adherent of the Medici, and far from being a fanatic, was by no means of a very religious turn of mind.

NOTE.

On the Language employed by Savonarola in his Sermons.

It will be clear, from what we have already said, that Mons. Perrens and many other writers were mistaken in their belief that Savonarola frequently delivered his sermons in Latin. This error was caused by finding that the holograph manuscripts of many of the sermons, including those on the First Epistle of St. John, as well as their first printed edition, were in Latin. But at that time it was the general habit to write in that tongue. When, however, the sermons began to be reported as they were spoken (as, for instance, in Ser Lorenzo Violi's collection), they were always published in Italian; although, even then, when Savonarola himself sketched or wrote them out for the press he found it easier to write them in Latin. It is an undoubted fact that he always preferred to write in that tongue. All the marginal notes in his Bibles are in Latin, so too all his rough sketches for sermons preserved in the Florence National Library, and the holograph codex at St. Mark's. But even in these first rough notes, we often find that when Savonarola wished to put a thought into shape, and reduce it to the form in which it was to be delivered as part of a sermon, he wrote it out in Italian; whereas in jotting down ideas as they first occurred to him, he always used Latin, and probably preached sometimes to his monks in that language when no other hearers were present. Many of his works, originally written in Latin, were afterwards translated by himself into Italian, for a second edition, and *for the use of believers in general.* These words being prefixed by Savonarola to every translation of his works, it is plain that there is no foundation for the belief expressed by some writers that Latin was commonly understood by the people at that period. But as it was the language of the learned classes throughout Europe, it was naturally employed in all theological and philosophical works, and all the more so because, in order to treat of these themes in Italian, it would have been requisite to coin new phrases and forms of speech, almost, indeed, to create a new language. Accordingly it was found easier to write first in Latin, and then translate into the vulgar tongue. To conclude these remarks, we need only add that Savonarola's sermons on "Noah's Ark," delivered in 1494, were taken down from his lips in Italian, but were afterwards, in order to *improve their literary form* (as their editor informs us), translated into dog-Latin, and thus published and reprinted at Venice several times during the sixteenth century. The sermons on "The Book of Job" were similarly taken down in Italian and translated into Latin, and then again rendered in the Vulgate, *as at first they were truly composed and preached;* so we are told by the editor of the Italian edition (Venice: Bascarini. 1545). All this serves to convince us that, although some of Savonarola's sermons are found to be in Latin, both in their first printed edition and in the holograph manuscript, this by no means implies that they were delivered in that language.

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[1] *Vide* Note to the following page.

CHAPTER IX.

DEATH OF LORENZO DE' MEDICI AND OF POPE INNOCENT VIII.—ELECTION OF ALEXANDER VI.—SAVONAROLA'S JOURNEY TO BOLOGNA.—SEPARATION OF THE CONVENT OF ST. MARK FROM THE LOMBARD CONGREGATION.—REFORMS IN THE CONVENT.

(1492–93.)

LORENZO DE' MEDICI had retired to his pleasant country house at Careggi. He was wasting away from severe internal disease, and by the beginning of April, 1492, all hope of his recovery was at an end. His doctors had exhausted all the resources of their skill; the renowned physician, Lazzaro of Pavia, had been summoned in vain, even his marvellous potion of distilled gems having failed to take effect. The Magnificent was near unto death. A few faithful friends cheered his last hours by their devoted affection. Ficino and Pico paid him frequent visits, and Angelo Poliziano never left his bedside. The latter was sincerely attached to Lorenzo; and felt that in losing him, he lost the patron to whom he owed everything and to whom he was bound by stronger ties of gratitude than to any other man upon earth. In vain he sought to hide his grief, to repress his tears. Lorenzo fixed his eyes upon him with the enigmatic glance peculiar to the dying, and then, unable longer to restrain his feelings, Poliziano burst into a flood of tears.[1]

These proofs of affection gave solemnity to these last hours, and the Magnificent, having now turned his thoughts to religion, seemed to be a changed man. In fact, when the last sacrament was about to be administered to him, he insisted on rising, and leaning on the arms of his friends, tottered forward to meet the priest, who, seeing how much he was overcome by emotion, was obliged to order him back to his bed. But it was extremely difficult to soothe his agitation. Lorenzo's mind was haunted by spectres of the past; and as his last moments drew near, all his sins rose before him in increasing magnitude, became more and more threatening. The last offices of religion were powerless to conquer his terrors, for having lost all faith in mankind, he could not believe in his confessor's sincerity. Accustomed to see his slightest wish obeyed and all the world bow to his will, he could not realize that any one would dare to deny him absolution. Accordingly the blessing of the Church was powerless to lighten the weight burdening his conscience, and he was more and more cruelly tortured by remorse. No one has ever dared to refuse me anything—he thought to himself, and thus the idea that had once been his chief pride became his worst torment.

Suddenly, however, he thought of Savonarola's stern face; here, he remembered, was a man who had been equally unmoved by his threats and his blandishments, and thereupon he exclaimed, "I know no honest friar save this one," and expressed his desire to confess to Savonarola. A messenger was instantly despatched to St. Mark's, and the Prior was so astounded by the strange and unexpected summons, that he almost refused to believe it, and answered that it seemed useless for him to go to Careggi, since no words of his would be acceptable to Lorenzo. But on learning the desperate condition of the sick man, and his earnest desire to confess to him, he set forth without delay.

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[1] Politiani, "Epistolæ." Jacopo Antiquario, xv. kalendas iunias 1492.

On that day Lorenzo thoroughly realized that his end was at hand. He had sent for his son Piero, and given him his final counsels and last farewells. His friends had been dismissed during this interview, but when they were allowed to return to the room and had persuaded Piero to retire, as his presence agitated his father too much, Lorenzo expressed a wish to see Pico della Mirandola once more, and the latter immediately came to him. The sweet aspect of the kindly, gentle young man seemed to have a soothing effect upon him, for he said: I should have been very sorry to die, without first being cheered a little by thy presence. And thereupon his face grew calm, his discourse almost cheerful; and he began to laugh and jest with his friend. Pico had scarcely left the room before Savonarola entered it, and respectfully approached the bed of the dying prince. Lorenzo explained that there were three sins on his conscience which he was specially anxious to confess, in order to be absolved from them: the sack of Volterra; the robbery of the *Monte delle Fanciulle*, whereby so many girls had been driven to a life of shame; and the bloody reprisals following the conspiracy of the Pazzi. In speaking of these things, even before beginning his private confession, the Magnificent again fell into great agitation, and Savonarola sought to calm him by repeating: God is good, God is merciful . . . But, he added, directly Lorenzo had ceased speaking, three things are needful. What things, Father? replied Lorenzo. Savonarola's face grew stern, and extending the fingers of his right hand, he began thus: Firstly, a great and living faith in God's mercy.—

I have the fullest faith in it. Secondly, you must restore all your ill-gotten wealth, or at least charge your sons to restore it in your name.—At this the Magnificent seemed to be struck with surprise and grief; nevertheless, making an effort, he gave a nod of assent. Savonarola then stood up, and whereas the dying prince lay cowering with fear in his bed, he seemed to soar above his real stature as he said: Lastly, you must restore liberty to the people of Florence. His face was solemn; his voice almost terrible; his eyes, as if seeking to divine the answer, were intently fixed on those of Lorenzo, who, collecting all his remaining strength, angrily turned his back on him without uttering a word. Accordingly Savonarola left his presence without granting him absolution, and without having received any actual and detailed confession. The Magnificent remained torn by remorse, and soon after breathed his last, on April 8, 1492.[1]

The death of Lorenzo de' Medici wrought great changes not only in the affairs of Tuscany, but of all Italy. His skilful mode of action, the prudence with which he had maintained his position with regard to other potentates, and his dexterity in keeping them all, if not united, at least in balance, had rendered him the arbiter, as it were, of Italian politics, and Florence the centre of the gravest affairs of state. Piero de' Medici, on the contrary, was in all respects the opposite of his father. Handsome and robust in person, he cared only for sensual pleasures and athletic sports. He had a great aptitude for spinning improvised verses, and a graceful and pleasant delivery; but he only aspired to excel as a horseman and in the lists, at football, boxing, and tennis. Indeed he was so proud of his skill in these games as to challenge all the best players in Italy, and persuade them to come to Florence. He inherited from his mother all the pride of the Orsini house, but had none of the courteous refinement of manner that had so largely contributed to his father's popularity. On the contrary, he gave offence to all by his uncouthness, and indulged in such violent transports of anger, that on one occasion, before many witnesses, he boxed the ears of one of his cousins. Behaviour of this kind was far more intolerable to the Florentines than any open violation of the laws, and was quite sufficient to raise numerous enemies against him.[1]

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[1] *Vide* Note at the end of the chapter.

And he not only offended private individuals, but contrived, at the very beginning of his reign, to so thoroughly disgust all the Italian princes, that Florence speedily lost the proud pre-eminence Lorenzo had gained for her. Even the most pressing affairs of state were entirely neglected by Piero, whose sole concern was to find opportunities for increasing his personal power, and who daily swept away some of the semblances of freedom, which the Magnificent had so shrewdly preserved, and to which the people were still so attached. Hence, there were growing murmurs among the bulk of the citizens, and a hostile party had been already formed, and was continually gaining fresh recruits from the ranks of those who, in Lorenzo's time, had been staunch adherents of the Medici. A presentiment of coming change was already in the air, and there was a growing desire and necessity for a change of some sort, inasmuch as Piero, being forsaken by men of good repute, was obliged to lean more and more upon untried and incapable persons.

Meanwhile the multitude assembled in increasing numbers round the pulpit of Savonarola, who was now considered the preacher of the party opposed to the Medici. That Lorenzo, on his death-bed, should have wished to confess to him had infinitely raised him in the estimation of all those admirers of the prince, who were now alienated by the violence and uncertain policy of his son. And the lower classes, on their side, were beginning to recall how Savonarola had once predicted to several influential citizens,[1] in the Sacristy of St. Mark's, the approaching death of Lorenzo, the Pope, and the Neapolitan king. One part of this prophecy had been almost immediately fulfilled; and another seemed about to come to pass.

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[1] Nardi, "Storia di Firenze"; Guicciardini, "Storia d'Italia," and "Storia Florentina"; Sismondi, "Hist des Rép. Ital.," &c.

In fact, the vital powers of Innocent VIII. were rapidly sinking: he had been lying for some time in a lethargic state, that was occasionally so death-like as to make his attendants believe that all was over. Every means of restoring his exhausted vitality had been tried in vain, when a Jewish doctor proposed to attempt his cure by means of a new instrument for the transfusion of blood. Hitherto this experiment had only been tried upon animals; but now the blood of the decrepit Pontiff was to be transfused into the veins of a youth, who gave him his own in exchange. Thrice, in fact, was the difficult experiment made. It did no good to the Pope, and three boys, costing the sum of one ducat apiece, lost their lives, through the introduction of air into their veins.[2] The Jewish doctor then fled, and on July 25, 1492, Innocent VIII. finally expired. Intrigues for the election of his successor were immediately set on foot.

The corruption of the Roman Court had now reached so high a pitch, that enormities formerly carried on in secret, and even thus causing much scandal and universal lamentation, were now openly practised and almost unremarked. The number of cardinals sitting in conclave was only twenty-three; and the election being a simple matter of traffic, was carried by Roderigo Borgia, the candidate able to bid the highest price and promise the greatest number of preferments. Mules laden with gold were seen entering the palace-yard of Ascanio Sforza,[1] Borgia's most dreaded competitor, who also gained, in return for his vote, the office of Vice-Chancellor and other almost equally lucrative appointments. The Romans viewed these things with indifference, and discussed the details of their bargain as though it were all in the natural course of events.[2]

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[1] These citizens were: Alessandro Acciaioli, Cosimo Rucellai, and Carlo Carnesecchi. As we have before stated, this prediction is mentioned by many writers (*vide* Note 2, to page 131); and Savonarola frequently alluded to it in his sermons.

[2] "Iudeus quidem aufugit, et Papa sanatus non est," are the concluding words of Infessura. But the Florentine ambassador, does not give this incident, although it is recorded by many historians.

The name of the new Pope, Alexander VI., has too evil a notoriety for it to be necessary to speak of him at much length. Roderigo Borgia was of Spanish birth, and had studied law in Italy. Owing to his great facility of address, astonishing aptitude for business, particularly in the management of finance, and above all by the favour of his uncle, Calixtus III., he had risen step by step to the rank of Cardinal and the possession of large revenues. One of his strongest passions was an insatiable greed for gold; and he accordingly formed intimate relations with Moors, Turks, and Jews, regardless of all the prejudices and customs of his age. In this way he was enabled to accumulate the immense fortune that served to raise him to the papacy. Addicted to license and sensuality, he was always the slave of some woman. At the time of his election he was the lover of the notorious Vannozza, by whom he had several children. This woman's mother was said to have been his former mistress, just as he was afterwards accused of a shameful connection with his own and Vannozza's daughter, Lucrezia, known to all the world as the cause of the many scandals and sanguinary jealousies by which the name of Borgia became a disgrace to humanity. Such was the character of the man now raised to the papal chair; and therefore, in spite of official rejoicings, the announcement of his election was received throughout Italy with universal dismay. According to Guicciardini, Ferdinand of Naples burst into tears at the news, although never before known to weep, even for the death of his own children.[1]

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[1] Brother of Ludovic the Moor.

[2] *Vide* Infessuræ, "Diarium"; Burchardi, "Diarium"; Guicciardini, "Storia d' Italia"; and almost every historian of Rome and the Popes.

Nevertheless the beginning of the new pontificate did not seem to justify the evil expectations formed of it. For the first time some order was introduced into the administration of the papal revenues. During the past years crimes of every kind had been rampant in the Campagna and all the provinces, acts of violence being committed almost by the hundred each week. These were now rigorously repressed, and their number diminished with marvellous speed. But it was soon found that the aim of all these improvements was to give the Pope increased facility for extorting money from his subjects, and establish stronger principalities for his children, who were already notorious for the enormity of their lusts and the atrocity of their crimes.

These things began to have a terrifying effect on men's minds, and every one thought of the future with the utmost trepidation. All eyes, therefore, were turned towards the man who had already prophesied evil to Italy and the Church, and whose words now seemed to be so strangely fulfilled. Two of the princes whose deaths he had foreseen were already in their graves; the third was too decrepit to last much longer; and for ages the Church had never been in so deplorable a state. The three famous "Conclusions" pronounced by the Friar passed therefore from mouth to mouth; true believers, in their unhappiness, began to place implicit faith in them; and thus the confused terror oppressing the public mind, served to the increase of Savonarola's fame. He himself was at once the source and the victim of these gloomy presentiments. His predictions spread alarm on all sides, and seeing that nearly all believed them and adopted his ideas, he became more excited by them himself, and more convinced of their truth. The times he had prophesied seemed at last near at hand; he read and re-read the prophets; his sermons in the churches of St. Lorenzo and Santa Reparata were marked by greater vehemence; nor is it any wonder that, in this state of mind, he should have again beheld visions.

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[1] Guicciardini, "Storia d' Italia," vol. i. p. 9. Gregorovius and Reumont have recently written on the history of the Borgia family, and fresh light has also been thrown on the subject by the "Dispacci" of A. Giustiniani, edited by ourselves. Florence: Successori Le Monnier, 1876, 3 vols.

In fact we learn from his own words that, during this year 1492, two visions were shown to him, which he was forced to accept as revelations from heaven. The night before his last Advent sermon, he beheld in the middle of the sky a hand bearing a sword, upon which these words were inscribed: "*Gladius Domini super terram cito et velociter.*" He heard many clear and distinct voices promising mercy to the good, threatening chastisement to the wicked, and proclaiming that the wrath of God was at hand. Then, suddenly the sword was turned towards the earth; the sky darkened; swords, arrows, and flames rained down: terrible thunderclaps were heard; and all the world was a prey to war, famine, and pestilence. The vision ended with a command to Savonarola to make these things known to his hearers, to inspire them with the fear of God, and to beseech the Lord to send good shepherds to His Church, so that the lost sheep might be saved.[1]

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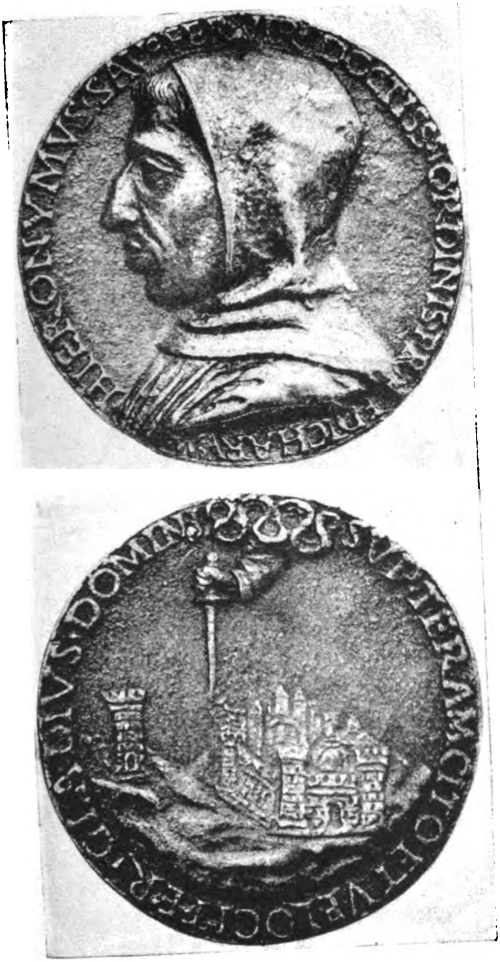
[1] "Comp. Revelationum," p. 231, and following.



SAVONAROLA MEDAL.

("GLADIUS DOMINI SUPER TERRAM CITO ET VELOCITER.")

This vision was afterwards recorded by innumerable medals and engravings; and it almost served as a symbol of Savonarola and his doctrines.[1] During Lent, and precisely on Good Friday, he saw another vision, in which a black cross rose from the city of Rome, and reaching the heavens, stretched its arms over the whole earth. Upon the cross was written, "*Crux iræ Dei.*" The sky was densely black, lightning flashed, thunder pealed, there came a storm of wind and hail. From the centre of Jerusalem rose a golden cross, shedding its rays over the whole world, and upon this was written, "*Crux Misericordiæ Dei,*" and all the nations flocked to adore it.[2]

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[1] Many medals were struck in Savonarola's honour. They are minutely described by all writers on the Italian medalists of the Renaissance, and two of these authors' names may be quoted: Friedländer, "Die Italienischen Schaumüngen des fünfzehnten jahrhunderts" (Berlin, 1880–82); and A. Heiss, "Les Médailleurs de la Renaissance" (Paris: Rothschild, 1881–86). Two of the Savonarola medals are, as it were, prototypes of all the others, and are preserved in the Uffizii Gallery at Florence.

The first of the two, attributed by Heiss and a few other writers to one of the Della Robbia family, bears on the obverse the Friar's head, cowled, but with the rather high forehead left uncovered. The legend encircling it is, "*Hieronymus Savonarola Ferrariensis vir doctissimus ordinis prædichatorum.*" On the upper part of the reverse is a hand with a dagger; beneath a city (Florence or Rome), and round it the words, "*Gladius Domini super terram cito et velociter.*" This medal gave origin to several others, among them one of much later date, with the bust of Savonarola, crucifix in hand. The reverse is divided by a vertical line, on the right side of which there is a hand with a dagger above a city; on the left side the emblem of the Holy Ghost, and the earth beneath. The legend is almost identical with those of the older medals.

The second prototype shows Savonarola's head with the cowl drawn forward, very like the head in Giovanni delle Corniole's engraving. The only inscription is, "*F. Hieronimus Savonarola ordinis prædicatorum.*" On the reverse, a hand with a sword in the sky; and to the left of this, the Holy Spirit and a shower of flames falling on the earth. There should be the same inscription as on the other medals, "*Gladius Domini,*" &c., and "*Spiritus Domini super terram copiose et abundanter.*" But neither was given in the medal shown to us.

[2] In the "Compendium Revelationum," pp. 244–5, Savonarola says that this vision appeared to him on Good Friday, while he was preaching in

Savonarola was now increasingly earnest in proclaiming his doctrines of chastisement and regeneration, basing his arguments not only on reason and the Bible, but even on the authority of his visions. He continued to do this throughout the year 1492, and particularly during Lent. It was then that he began those celebrated discourses on "Noah's Ark" which made so great a sensation, were afterwards continued, and concluded, with still greater success, in 1494. But more will be said of them hereafter, when reviewing the whole series.

Meanwhile, we often find him unexpectedly absent from Florence. In February and May, 1492, he made journeys to Venice, either shortly before or shortly after his visit to Pisa, where he gave a few sermons in the Monastery of Santa Caterina, and contracted a friendship with Stefano da Codiponte,[1] afterwards one of the most faithful and devoted of his followers. But in the Lent of 1493 he made a still longer absence, and preached in Bologna. It appears that Piero de' Medici, being less

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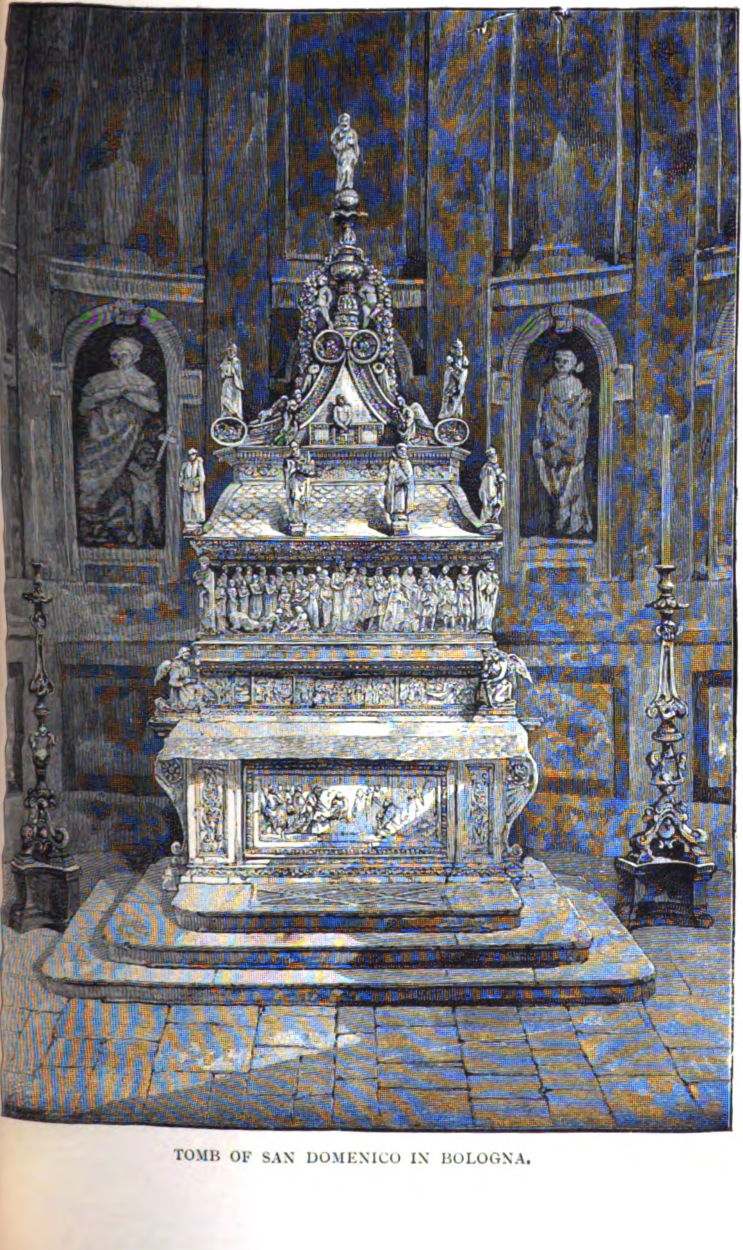
S. Lorenzo, during the Lent of 1492. It is proved by Signor Gherardi's "Documenti" (p. 12) that his Lenten sermons for 1492 were delivered in that church, and from Violi's "Giornate" (*vide* doc. xvi. of appendix to Italian edition) we learn that Savonarola then began his course of sermons on Noah's Ark. This year could not be that of 1493, common style, for it is well known that in 1493 Savonarola was Lenten preacher in Bologna. The Easter of 1492 fell on the 22nd of April, and this seems to explain why the Lent was dated 1492 both in the Florentine and the common calendar.

[1] He was a young man from Liguria, who had come to study law in the Pisan University. Being tired of the world, he became a monk in 1491, and then wearying of the cloister, asked leave to return to it. But just then Savonarola came to Pisa, and Codiponte was so deeply moved by his sermons that he not only recurred to his first purpose, but adhered to it most firmly, and became very zealous in the faith and devoted to Savonarola. One of the most beautiful of the Friar's letters is addressed to Codiponte, and dated 22nd May, 1492. This letter was discovered by us in the Riccardi Library (Codex 2053), and is given in Document x. of the appendix to the Italian edition. For facts concerning Codiponte, see the "Annali del Monastero di Santa Caterina di Pisa," published in the "Archivio Storico Italiano," vol. vi. part ii. p. 615.



TOMB OF SAN DOMENICO IN BOLOGNA.

judicious than his father, wished to be rid of this too popular preacher, round whom all his enemies were beginning to rally. He accordingly arranged with the superiors of the Order in Rome or Milan to have the Friar removed from Florence, and wished Frà Mariano to come back and resume his sermons.[1] The brethren of St. Mark's were sorely grieved by the prolonged absence of their Prior, and Savonarola endeavoured to console them by letter. "Your tender affection is ever in my mind, and I often speak of it with Frà Basilio, my very dear son and your true brother in Christ Jesus. . . . We lead a very solitary life, like unto two turtle-doves, awaiting the spring to return again to the soft climate where we once dwelt, amid the blossoms and joys of the Holy Spirit. . . . But if your sadness seems too great for ye to deem life possible without me, your love is still imperfect, and therefore God has taken me from ye for some space of time."[2]

Nevertheless, Savonarola remained at Bologna very reluctantly. Banished from Florence as too great a partisan of the people, he found himself ill at ease in a city ruled by the iron hand of a Bentivoglio, and where he was obliged to keep strictly within bounds. Being thus constrained to preach in a manner opposed to his inclination, he spoke coldly, and was styled "a simple man, and a preacher for women."[3] But his name proved an attraction to the crowd, and numbers flocked to hear him. Among them was Bentivoglio's wife, who always, arriving very late with a long train of ladies, cavaliers, and pages, daily interrupted the sermon. This was an irregularity that Savonarola would by no means tolerate. For the first day or so he paused in his discourse, thinking that this would be a sufficient reproof; but finding that the annoyance was continued and increased, he made some remarks on the sin of disturbing the devotions of the faithful. Thereupon, her pride being offended, the lady came later and later, made more noise, and behaved with haughtier disrespect. At last, one morning, Savonarola being interrupted in the heat of his discourse, could no longer restrain his anger, and cried out:—"Behold, here cometh the devil to interrupt God's word." At this Dame Bentivoglio was so enraged, that she directed two of her grooms to strike him dead in the pulpit. They, however, shrank from so great an atrocity. Then, increasingly indignant at the thought of having been put to humiliation by a monk, she despatched two other satellites to fall upon the preacher in his cell, and do him, at least, some grievous bodily hurt. But Savonarola faced the men with so much firmness, and addressed them in so dignified and commanding a tone, that they were awed by his words, and slunk away in confusion. Fortunately Lent was nearly over, and he was soon to bid the people farewell. Nevertheless, in order to show that he was not easily cowed, he publicly announced from the pulpit: "This evening I set forth on my journey to Florence, with my little staff and a wooden flask, and I shall rest at Pianoro. If any man have aught to say to me, let him come before I leave. But I tell ye that my death is not to take place in Bologna."[1]

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[1] Proofs of this are given in the documents published by Cappelli, "Frà Girolamo Savonarola," &c., pp. 28–30.

[2] This letter, which is full of affection and Christian counsel, is given in Quétif's "Additions" to Pico's biography of Savonarola, vol. ii., p. 99. Quetif says "*quando praedicabat Bononiæ, anno millesimo quadringentesimo nonagesimo secundo.*" But this was the year 1493, according to the common style, as is also proved by another of Savonarola's letters published in Cappelli's "Frà Girolamo Savonarola," p. 30. As usual, the biographers are somewhat confused in their dates.

[3] "Biografia Latina," chap. x., at sheet 9; Burlamacchi, p. 26; Padre Marchese, "Scritti Vari" (we always quote from Le Monnier's first edition of the work), p. 136.

On his arrival in Florence he found the city in a worse state than before, Piero's insolence having so much increased, that each day brought fresh proofs of the popular discontent. Consequently the Prior of St. Mark's found himself in a position of great difficulty. He had either to keep silence or run the risk of being again banished by order of his superiors in Lombardy or Rome. While reflecting on this state of things, Savonarola remembered that the Tuscan Congregation had always been separate from that of Lombardy, down to the year 1448, when it was joined to the latter, because the Tuscan convents were deserted on account of the plague: consequently it might not be impossible to restore the Congregation to its former independence, now that it numbered so many more brethren.[1] Accordingly he applied all his energy to effect this change on which depended the success of all his future designs, and it is possible that he began to negotiate the affair as far back as 1492, during his various visits to Venice, where the General of the Order, Giovacchino Turriano, was then resident. It is certain that this affair first brought his great shrewdness and practical energy to light, and made the frivolous inconsistency of Piero de' Medici still more clearly apparent. For Piero let himself be persuaded to favour a measure tending to neutralise his own authority over the convent of St. Mark, and caused the magistrates to write letters pressingly recommending it to the Florentine ambassador in Rome, and to the Cardinal of Naples, the patron of the Order.[2] His conduct was all the more inexplicable, since he had now taken under his protection the Frati Minori (Franciscans), who had always been hostile to the Dominicans, and who, by urging from the pulpit the expulsion of the Jews, against the express orders of the Signory, had caused many disturbances in Florence.[1] Either failing to see the importance of the request, and, as usual, wishing to spite Ludovico the Moor, or because the idea of a Tuscan Congregation tickled his fancy, and made him hope to win the hearts of the friars of St. Mark's, by promoting its formation, it is certain that, on this occasion, Piero played into Savonarola's hands. Accordingly the Prior seized the opportunity by instantly despatching to Rome Frà Roberto Ubaldini, Frate Alessandro Rinuccini, and Frà Domenico da Pescia.[2] The latter monk was already his most sincere and zealous disciple. Born at the foot of the Pistoian Apennines, he had all the daring of a mountaineer: his ingenuous, faithful soul was full of enthusiastic devotion for Savonarola, he believed him to be a prophet sent to Florence from God, and would have gone to the stake for him without a moment's hesitation.

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[1] *Vide* the same authors quoted above.

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[1] Padre Marchese, p. 83. Savonarola frequently spoke on this subject, and it was also mentioned by the Council of Ten in the despatches they sent to Rome, as we shall have occasion to see further on.

[2] *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xi. and xiv.

When the three friars arrived in Rome they found that the official support of Florence was not sufficient to defeat the Lombards, who, through the intervention of Ludovico the Moor, were energetically seconded by many ambassadors. Thus a convent quarrel had assumed the proportions of an affair of state. On the one side the Signory of Florence, the Cardinal of Naples, Piero, and Cardinal dei Medici, were writing and exerting their influence in favour of St. Mark's; on the other, the Lombard friars, Ludovico the Moor, Venice and Rome, were against it. Thereupon Savonarola's envoys wrote to him that there was no hope of success; but he only replied, "Fear not, remain firm, and you will conquer: the Lord scattereth the counsels of the nations, and overthroweth the designs of princes." [1]

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[1] There is a minute account of these riots in Parenti's "Storia di Firenze," vol. i., at sheet 23; and *passim*, Codex ii. 129, in the Florence National Library.

[2] Frà Roberto Ubaldini, author of the "Annali di San Marco," states that he went to Rome to accompany Frate Alessandro, who was old and in bad health; he does not mention Frà Domenico, who may have followed afterwards. ("Annales Conventus S. Marci," at sheets 13 and 14.) On the other hand, Burlamacchi (p. 47), makes no mention of Ubaldini. In the "Biografia Latina" (at sheet 11') we find these words: "Pro hac re Romam miserunt fratrem Alexandrum Rinuccinum senem, et fratrem Dominicum pisciensem." In the despatch sent by the Signory to the Cardinal of Naples, only Rinuccini and Frà Domenico are mentioned. (*Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xiv.)

In fact, victory was finally gained in a very strange and unexpected manner. A rumour was spread in Rome to the effect that many of the brethren of St. Mark's were opposed to the separation proposed by Savonarola. Thereupon the latter called a grand assembly of all his friars and made them sign a special petition, attested by the Signory.[2] Nevertheless, on the 22nd of May, 1493, all hope of success seemed at an end, for the Pope dissolved the consistory in a fit of ill temper, saying that he was not disposed to sign briefs that day. Being left alone with the Cardinal of Naples he fell into lively conversation with him, indulging as usual in many extravagant jests. It seemed to the Cardinal that the right moment had come, and quickly producing the Brief (which was already drawn up) from his pocket, besought the Holy Father to sign it. He laughingly refused, and the Cardinal laughing also, drew the Pope's ring from his finger, and sealed the Brief.[3] This was scarcely done when, as though with a presentiment of what had occurred, messengers arrived in hot haste from the Lombards, armed with new and more powerful recommendations. But the Pope was already so sick of the affair, that he refused to hear another word about it, saying, "Had you come sooner your request would have been granted, but now what is done is done."[1] In this way the independence of St. Mark's was achieved, and Savonarola's words were fulfilled.

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[1] "Biografia Latina," chap. xiii.; Burlamacchi, p. 47. On this affair of the separation from the Lombard Order, many new documents have been published in Gherardi's collection, p. 12 and fol.

[2] Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," p. 12, and fol.

[3] There is a very incorrect copy of this Brief in the Riccardi Library, Codex 2053; but a more exact version was given in the "Bullarium Ord. Praedicatorum." (*Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xii.,

The Lombards, being thus unexpectedly worsted, made many attempts to get the Brief annulled, or to at least attenuate its effects, and in this they were encouraged by Piero de' Medici, who, after having opposed them, now wished to come to their aid.[2] But it was too late; for St. Mark's, as the head and centre of a congregation, was now subject only to Rome and the Superior of the Order. The latter at once transferred Savonarola and Frà Domenico to Florence, since both were still on the rolls of the Bolognese brotherhood; and at the same time issued strict orders to the Lombard friars to discontinue their fruitless opposition, and abstain from giving further annoyance to St. Mark's.[3] Savonarola was re-elected Prior, and the General, in a letter of the 15th November, conferred on him the post of Provincial of the Order.[1] Thus, at last, his independence was assured, he was his own master, could speak freely, and could not be easily removed from his established headquarters in Florence. He alone had seen from the first the importance of obtaining the Brief; others perceived it afterwards. Nevertheless new and greater dangers were rapidly drawing near; and Savonarola foresaw and did his best to prepare for them by hastening on his work.

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[1] "Biografia Latina," and Burlamacchi, loc. cit.; "Annales Conventus S. Marci," at sheet 13.

[2] Before the Roman Brief was signed, the Lombards had sent an order from Milan, commanding Savonarola to leave Florence without delay. Fortunately, however, the order was directed to the Prior of Fiesole, who chanced to be absent. Accordingly it only reached Savonarola after the Brief had arrived. Trusting to the aid of Piero de' Medici, whom they expected to retain the Brief for some time, the Lombards had made Savonarola agree to a convention stipulating that the Lombard Congregation should preserve its old authority in Tuscany, until the Brief was actually deposited at St. Mark's. But they failed at all points. Savonarola having foreseen how the affair would turn, had accepted the convention in a short letter of two or three lines, the only one (as far as we know) that he ever wrote to Piero de' Medici. Mons. Perrens reports, and cites it as a proof (vol. i. p. 51, note 2), that "le prieur sut fort bien, dans l'occasion, faire acte de soumission, si non à Laurent, du moins à son fils Piero" (vol. i. p. 51). But it is to be found in the Archivio Mediceo, with the convention to which we have alluded, and also another letter to Jacopo Salviati. These three documents (given in the Appendix to our Italian edition, doc. xiii.) show that the Prior's submission was only apparent. (See, too, the "Biografia Latina," ch. xiii.)

[3] Gherardi, p. 24; Burlamacchi, p. 48.

First of all it was requisite to re-establish order and discipline in the convent. At one time he had thought of withdrawing with his brethren to some mountain solitude, to lead a poor and hermit-like existence, and had discussed the matter with his disciples;[2] but these juvenile dreams had now yielded to riper ideas. It was no question of forsaking the world, but of living in its midst, in order to purify it; it was his business to train men, not to be good hermits, but worthy monks, living an exemplary life, and ready to shed their blood for the salvation of souls. To purify manners, rekindle faith and reform the Church, were the objects Savonarola sought to promote. And if enabled by the Lord's help to accomplish these holy desires, he would then depart from Italy with a chosen band of courageous brethren, in order to preach the Christian religion in the East. Constantinople was one of the dreams of those days: it was there that statesmen desired to crush the enemy of Europe and re-establish the Latin Empire; it was there that the clergy wished to convert the infidels and replace Jerusalem under the Christian rule; many men shared Savonarola's belief that the times announced by his prophecies were at hand, and that at last there would be *but one fold and one shepherd.*

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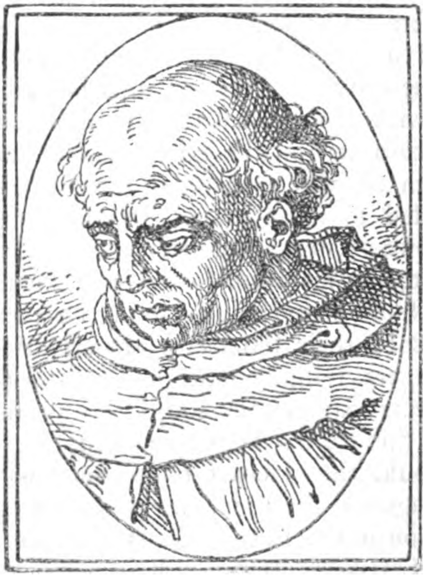
[1] Turriano's letter says: "Cum igitur continue multa possint accidere, quae mei officii requirant auctoritatem, ne vobis huc atque illuc post me sit cursitandum, &c." For these reasons he conferred this fresh authority upon him. (Gherardi, p. 23.)

[2] The author of the "Biografia Latina" was so affected by Savonarola's enthusiastic description of the life to be led in the new convent, that he wrote: "Et ego tunc in corde meo dixi: Illo in tempore efficiar religiosus, et non in tempore tepiditatis," chap. xii. at sheet 10. But he adds that some of the friars were of a different opinion, and showed themselves adverse to the severity of the new discipline proposed by Savonarola, saying: "Hoc futurum macellum fratrum." (Ibid., at sheet 11.) It seems that Savonarola was so intent on carrying out this idea, that he had already caused a wood to be cut down on the hill where he wished his hermitage to be built. (Burlamacchi, p. 46 and fol.)



FRA GIOVANNI DA FIESOLE.

To return to the convent, the first reform introduced by Savonarola was the re-establishment of the rule of poverty. St. Dominic had, in fact, pronounced a terrible curse on all who should allow monks of his order to possess property, nevertheless, after the death of St. Antonine, only the letter of his command remained on the convent walls.[1] A change in the constitution of the convent had given St. Mark's the right to hold property, and in a short time its wealth had been largely increased. Savonarola, therefore, revived the old rule and sold the possessions held by the convent in disobedience to the precepts of the founder of the Order.[1] But as free gifts had long diminished in quantity, it was requisite to find some other mode of supplying the brethren's needs. He reduced expenses by clothing them in coarse robes, stripping their cells of all superfluities and forbidding them to have illuminated books, gold or silver crucifixes, and similar vanities. But all this was insufficient. He therefore ordained that the friars should work for their bread, and opened schools for the study of painting, sculpture, and architecture, and the art of transcribing and illuminating manuscripts. The lay brethren and such of the monks as were unfitted for higher spiritual work, were to exercise these arts, in order to supply the needs of the convent.

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[1] "Have charity, preserve humility, observe voluntary poverty: may my malediction and that of God fall upon him that shall bring possessions to this Order." Such were the last words of St. Dominic to his disciples

These men were also to be charged with the cares of administration. In this way priests and prelates could more freely devote themselves to the duties of the confessional and the cure of souls, and to the spiritual and intellectual training of the novices. Those more advanced in the spirit of charity and in theological doctrine were to devote themselves to preaching and journey from city to city. Each of these missionaries was to be attended by a lay brother who was to work incessantly to provide for his wants, so that he might not be withheld from speaking unwelcome truths by fear of receiving no alms.[2] The three

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Fra Beato Angelico had decorated the outer wall of the dormitory with a Virgin and many saints, and among the latter was St. Dominic holding an open book, in which these words were written. (*Vide* Lacordaire, "Vita di San Dominico;" Padre Marchese, "Storia del Convento di San Marco," in the "Scritti Vari," pp. 80 and 139.)

[1] "Annales Conventus S. Marci," at sheet 13 and fol. "Biografia Latina," chap. xiii., at sheet 13.

[2] "Predicare veritatem ne timerent, dicendo: si dicimus veritatem omnibus, non dabunt elemosinas nam veritas odium parit, et sic desistent a veritate et sint canes muti." ("Biografia Latina," at sheet 11.)

studies Savonarola specially encouraged in his convent were theology; philosophical and moral science; and above all, the examination of the Holy Scriptures by the aid of Greek, Hebrew, and other Eastern tongues. These languages were also taught with a view to the time when, as he hoped, the Lord would send him and his brethren to preach the gospel to the Turks.[1]

It was far from easy to carry out all these ideas, nor were they altogether unopposed; but the convent soon began to flourish: there was a growing zeal for study, and love for the Bible and a spirit of religion were continually on the increase. There was every incitement to progress under a Prior who was a living example of the principles he inculcated. If severe to others, he was still more severe to himself: his clothes were the coarsest, his bed the hardest, his cell the poorest of all. From letters written by him at this period, it is plain that he was in a very excited state of mind, convinced that a new and startling reform was at hand, and that this was clearly inspired by the will of God. "You ask what we are doing," he replied, in a letter dated September 10, 1493, to an abbess of Ferrara, who had expressed some doubts as to the innovations he had made. "What are we doing? only casting away superfluities, and returning to the simplicity and poverty enjoined by the original rules of our Order. The real innovation was when mendicant friars were seen to build sumptuous palaces. We first devoted long hours to prayer, and then awaited the voice of the Lord, which hath now been heard. Could I speak with you, I should be able to make you understand that the world is all darkened, all depraved, and that it is time to regenerate God's people. It is time, it is time, it is time, my well beloved mother. The Lord is weary, and it behoves us to despise the judgment of the lukewarm; we must be ready to face the persecutions inevitably directed against any good work. And we are ready."[1]

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[1] "Biografia Latina," chaps. xii. and xiii.; Burlamacchi, p. 44 and fol.; "Padre Marchese," p. 31 and fol. Savonarola often alludes in his sermons to the various languages taught in the convent, and to the use that was to be made of them. The "Biografia Latina" tells us at sheet 12: "Perfectio trium (*sic*) linguarum, videlicet: Hebree, Grece, Latine, Caldee, Maure et Turche." Mons. Rio (*Art Chrétien*) speaks eloquently of the schools of fine arts in St. Mark's, but gives an exaggerated idea of their importance.

This spirit of enthusiasm had now spread through the whole population which was entirely favourable to St. Mark's. Many of the lower classes, many of the nobles sought leave to join the brotherhood; and it was said that even Angelo Poliziano and Pico della Mirandola were disposed to take the same step. The number of the friars increased so prodigiously that before long the original building was too small to contain them.

Nor was this enthusiasm confined to Florence, for we find it extending to convents in other parts of Tuscany. The communities of St. Dominic at Fiesole, Prato and Bibliena, and the two Magdalen hospices at Pian di Mugnone and Lecceto asked to be enrolled in the new Tuscan Congregation, and gained admittance at different times.[2] Things reached to such a pitch, that the Camaldolesians of the Monastery degli Angioli signed a legal contract, binding themselves to change their Order on purpose to join the brethren of St. Mark's. But Savonarola refused their request, as one he was unable to grant, without far exceeding the authority conferred upon him by the Brief.[3] He was unwilling to afford his enemies any excuse for attacking him; and although desirous to gather all the Dominicans of Tuscany about him he saw it would be difficult to accomplish on account of the party hatreds dividing the country.[1] In fact he had found it very hard to introduce his reforms in Pisa, although he went there in person; and of the forty-four Dominican friars in that city, only four, of whom Stefano Codiponte was the first, adhered to his views. The others quitted the city. And even this poor attempt at union came to nothing when Pisa rose against the Florentines.[2] At Siena he was received with still more disfavour, there was almost a riot, and the local Signory commanded him to depart.[3] He at once returned indignantly to Florence, where the congregation of St. Mark continued to flourish, increase in numbers, and effect fresh improvements. All the convents aggregated to it were zealous in the cause, and it received encouragement and sympathy from all the citizens of Florence.

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[1] This remarkable letter is given in the appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xv.

[2] "Biografia Latina," at sheet 12 and fol. Burlamacchi, p. 49 and fol.; "Annales Conventus S. Marci," at sheets 14 and 15; Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," p. 25 and fol.; Marchese, "Storia di San Marco," in the "Scritti Vari," p. 138 and fol.

[3] Ibid. at sheet 24. Burlamacchi, at p. 81 follows his usual custom of translating literally from the original Latin, and his additional words: "It was I who brought the contract" were inserted by another hand in the printed edition.

NOTE TO CHAPTER IX.

On the Death of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and the Last Words addressed to him by Savonarola.

SOME historians, especially those who always side with the Medici, deny that Savonarola really addressed Lorenzo in the terms we have described. One of the arguments they adduce in support of their assertion deserves to be taken into consideration. In his well-known letter to Jacopo Antiquario, Poliziano (book iv. epistle 11) gives a minute account of Lorenzo's illness and death, relates Savonarola's visit, but does not give the words we have quoted. Now, say these historians, he was the only eye-witness of the scene, and when narrating it in a private letter to a friend could have no motive for altering the facts; accordingly, his authority is more trustworthy than that of Savonarola's biographers, who have probably coloured the facts in their own way to their hero's advantage. But, first of all, we have no certain proof of Poliziano's presence during Savonarola's interview with Lorenzo. Without dwelling on the point that some of the biographers expressly assert that directly Savonarola entered *the others left the sick room*, it is certain that Poliziano himself states that he was frequently dismissed to the adjoining chamber, and it is most probable that he was sent away when Lorenzo was about to confess. Even if he remained present, it is hard to believe that the Magnificent would have spoken aloud of his sins, or that Poliziano, even had he known them, would have cared to make them public. As to his having communicated them privately to a friend, this is a reason only to be urged by some one ignorant of the fact that in the fifteenth century the private letters of learned men were as public as their works, and frequently collected and published by their authors.

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[1] In a letter to the Pope, of which we shall have occasion to speak hereafter, Savonarola treats of these enmities and of the dangers they caused him to incur.

[2] *Vide* "Annali del Convento di Santa Caterina et Pisa, published in the "Archivio Storico Italiano," vol. vi. part ii. p. 609 and fol.

[3] "Biografia Latina," chap. xiii. at sheet 12. Some new documents on this subject were published by Signor V. Mattii, in the appendix to his translation of the "Apologetica ec. di Frate Girolamo Savonarola." Siena: Bargellini, 1864.

We will now proceed to examine the authorities on whose account of the scene we have relied. Their number is infinite. It may be said that almost all the biographies of Savonarola, whether ancient or modern, in print or in manuscript, describe the interview in the same way, those of Perrens and Rastrelli alone excepted. Rastrelli was the author of the anonymous work (dated Geneva, 1781) to which we have before alluded, and which is a libel rather than a biography. We will confine ourselves to naming the principal contemporary authorities, from which all the other accounts are more or less derived. These are Placido Cinozzi's "Epistola;" G. F. Pico della Mirandola's "Vita," &c.; and the "Biografia Latina." It is needless to add that the same account is reported in Burlamacchi, Barsanti, Razzi, Frà Marco della Casa, and all the numerous biographies compiled from Burlamacchi's. Cinozzi reports the words pronounced by Savonarola, expressly remarking that all this was a preliminary to the confession that was never made after all, and saying in conclusion:—"And these words were repeated to me by Frà Silvestro, who died with his superior, Frà Ieronimo, and who, as I well believe, had them and heard them from P. F. Ieronimo's own lips." He omits Lorenzo's first words to Savonarola, and these are also omitted by Pico (chap. vi.), whose statement is identical with that of Cinozzi. The "Biografia Latina," on the other hand (chap. xi. at sheet 50), gives the entire dialogue, and adds:—Hæc verba retulit frater Silvester Maruffus, et dominus Dominicus Benevienus, canonicus

Sancti Laurenti. . . . De visitatione ista loquitur etiam Angelus Politianus," &c.

The first writer to question the authenticity of this dialogue, and founding his doubts on the authority of Poliziano, whose account is somewhat different from that of the others, was Fabroni, in his "Life of Lorenzo the Magnificent;" next came Roscoe, the frequent plagiarist of Fabroni; and lastly Mons. Perrens, who is so often misled by Roscoe's assertions. Of Rastrelli it is needless to speak, for his book is a pile of blunders and insults, and proves absolutely nothing. A judicious reply to Perrens was published by Ermolao Rubini in "La Polimazia" (year 11, Nos. 3 and 4: Florence, 1854), calling the French writer's attention to the fact that Poliziano's authority was by no means so valuable as he had supposed. In truth, the whole question hinges upon this point, whether we are to give more credence to Poliziano, who, being a courtier, was bound to speak of Lorenzo in a flattering sense, or to Cinozzi and the author of the "Biografia Latina," who, although staunch partizans of Savonarola, were nevertheless sincere and honest men; and to G. F. Pico, who was not only honest and sincere, but learned, intelligent, independent, and of a family bound by friendship to the Medici. Accordingly, whether we are to have greater faith in a courtier, who withholds a fact that he could not relate without injury to himself, or in honest men, contemporaries and friends of Savonarola, who, writing in times hostile to the latter's memory, would have been roughly called to account by followers of the Medici had they ventured on any false statements concerning Lorenzo.

Nor is this all. If Poliziano's letter is attentively read, it will be seen that, far from contradicting the fact as described by others, he merely alters it in so transparent a way that we may cull from his own words proofs of all that he sought to conceal :—"Abierat vix dum Picus, cum Ferrariensis Hieronymus, insignis et doctrina et sanctimonia vir, cœlestique doctrinæ prædicator egregius, cubiculum ingreditur, *hortatur ut fidem teneat; ille vero tenere se ait inconcussam: ut quam emendatissime posthac vivere destinet; scilicet facturum obnixe respondit: ut mortem denique, si necesse sit, æquo animo toleret; nihil vero, inquit ille, iucundius, si quidem ita Deo decretum sit. Recedebat homo iam, cum Laurentius:* Heus, inquit, benedictionem, Pater, priusquam a nobis profisceris. Simul demisso capite vultuque, et in omnem piæ religionis imaginem formatus, subinde ad verba illius et preces rite ac memoriter responsitabat, ne tantillum quidem familiarium luctu, aperto iam, neque se ulterius dissimulante, commotus. Diceres indictam cæteris, uno excepto Laurentio, mortem."

Now, who could really believe that Savonarola would have come to the dying Lorenzo of his own accord, and said to him—"First, have faith; secondly, seek to lead a righteous life; thirdly, prepare for death;" and that when the Magnificent had replied in the affirmative to all these demands, the friar would have gone away without even according him his blessing? There can be no doubt that if Savonarola went to Lorenzo it was at Lorenzo's request, for neither was he one to present himself unannounced, nor would the courtiers, in that case, have granted him admittance. Besides, why should Lorenzo have required Savonarola's presence at that moment, save for the purpose of confessing his sins and receiving ghostly comfort and absolution? And of what sins would he chiefly speak, if not of such as were known to all the world as the deepest crimes of his life; exactly those mentioned by Cinozzi, Burlamacchi, and others? Finally, if the friar prepared to depart, as it would seem, according to Poliziano, without bestowing his benediction, it is plain that Lorenzo had not been absolved from his sins. Therefore the question turns, neither upon the visit nor upon the absolution, which was certainly unaccorded, but upon Lorenzo's words (which seem to us the least important), and, above all, on the expressions used by Savonarola. Concerning the latter, Poliziano's narrative only differs from the others as regards the words said in conclusion; that is to say, he is silent as to Savonarola's last condition, "*You must restore liberty to the Florentines;*" and as to Lorenzo's refusal of it. But this was precisely the point that Poliziano could not repeat without danger to himself, and accordingly it was only too natural for him to change the real words into the general command, "*Prepare for death.*"

Of late years several weighty writers have revived the dispute, and have settled it, as it seems to us, in a manner giving additional confirmation to our own view of the case. Von Reumont, who is a learned admirer of the Medici, and hardly less enthusiastic than Roscoe, denied the scene *in toto* in the first edition of his work on Lorenzo de' Medici, and declared it to be altogether fictitious. Then came Professor Ranke ("Historisch-biographische Studien," p. 350), who went more minutely into the question, but without having consulted Cinozzi, the "Biografia Latina," or the numerous other old manuscripts in which the dialogue is given. He only referred to Pico and Burlamacchi, and (as we have before said) erroneously considering the latter a mere compilation from Pico, compared them together. Finding that Burlamacchi gives words spoken by Lorenzo, which are omitted in Pico, he concluded the latter to be purely fictitious and incredible, since they could have been only related by Savonarola, who, in that case, must have divulged the secrets of the confessional. He was unaware that the identical words were given in the "Biografia Latina," failed to observe that Savonarola could scarcely have apostrophized Lorenzo *ex abrupto* unless the latter had first spoken, and did not notice that, like Cinozzi, Pico states that no actual confession was made, as indeed may be ascertained from the pages of Poliziano and others. Cinozzi writes that Lorenzo, having spoken a little, concluded by saying that he wished to confess, and that Savonarola replied: "*That before confession he had three things to say to him.*" Pico: "Si antequam noxas contractas confiteretur, tria præstaret" (p. 24). The "Biographia Latina" and Burlamacchi both relate that directly Lorenzo beheld Savonarola he said that he wished to make confession, but was tormented by three things. Therefore he spoke before confession. In any case, even according to Professor Ranke, Pico has preserved Savonarola's words, which is the important point, and, in spite of his doubts, the modern historian cannot decide to reject them. So we see in the end that the historic sense and profoundly critical intelligence of Professor Ranke prevented him from altogether rejecting the fact, even though he was ignorant that it had been narrated by several of the older biographers. His doubts would have probably disappeared had he been acquainted with their works. His verdict has rather shaken that of Baron von Reumont, who, in the second edition of his work on Lorenzo de' Medici (vol. ii. p. 443), expresses a far less absolute opinion, and merely says that the question is still unsettled. Nevertheless, he still finds it strange that Savonarola should exact from a dying man the restoration of Florentine liberty. How was he to restore it? But Lorenzo was not yet dead; he might have lingered for a time; and, in any case, it was a question of intention. On the other hand, Poliziano's narrative would be altogether inexplicable unless it were admitted that he coloured the facts in his own way, while it is also clear that he could not make a genuine report of them, like that of other and more independent contemporaries, without offending the friends and memory of his deceased patron.

In connection with our theme we may here mention a very badly restored picture, attributed by some authorities to Sandro Botticelli, preserved in the store-rooms of the Uffizii Gallery. At first sight its subject might appear to be an Adoration of the Magi, but on closer examination we find it to represent a great multitude engaged in adoring the Virgin and Child. In the midst of the crowd there is seen the figure of a Dominican friar addressing an apparently terror-stricken man, and pointing with an energetic gesture of his outstretched arm and hand to the child Christ, as though in the act of saying, "Repent and adore!" The friar certainly bears a resemblance to Savonarola, and the man addressed by him to Lorenzo de' Medici. The first person to notice and call public attention to this was Mr. Charles Heath Wilson, the learned English connoisseur of Italian art, and author of a life of "Michelangelo Buonarotti."

CHAPTER X.

SAVONAROLA EXPOUNDS THE CHIEF POINTS OF HIS DOCTRINES DURING ADVENT, 1493—HE PREDICTS THE COMING OF THE FRENCH DURING THE LENT OF 1494.

(1493–1494.)

IN the Advent season of 1493 Savonarola resumed his preachings in Florence, and, with a continually increasing public, was encouraged to greater hardihood and freedom of speech. He now spoke, not only as a saintly friar whose prophecies had been wonderfully fulfilled, but also as the independent head of the Tuscan Congregation. Accordingly his words carried double weight, and he was able to express himself as daringly as he chose without fearing the vengeance of Piero de' Medici. In fact, the infamous manners of the princes and priests of Italy; the corruption of the Church; the approach of the threatened scourges; and the anxiety of the righteous to put an end to the general depravation, were the themes of the twenty-five sermons preached by him, on the Psalm *Quam bonus*, during Advent this year. But these discourses also contained minute examinations of important points of Christian theology; for he aimed at giving a complete exposition of his doctrines, tracing them in firm lines, so as to impress them thoroughly on his hearers' minds, and thus enable the latter to prepare for the chastisements by which they were about to be assailed. From the theological point of view, these sermons were undoubtedly among the best Savonarola ever delivered.

We may begin by citing his own words upon faith: "Faith is the gift of God, given to every believer for his salvation; therefore, my children, share not the errors of those who say to ye, 'If I saw some miracle, or some man raised from the dead, then would I believe.' Those men are deceived, for faith cometh not of our own strength, but is a supernatural gift—that is, a light shed from above into the mind of man. And he that would receive this light must prepare his inner man and abase himself before God."[1] Here it might be urged—if all things be ordained to an end, they reach that end by natural means; how, then, should it be that the nature of man may not suffice of itself to attain the end to which it is pre-ordained? Is man, then, inferior to the beasts? No; this must be attributed to his nobility and his excellence, inasmuch as he is ordained to a Divine end, an end that transcends nature.[2] But mayhap, thou wouldst then ask, Wherefore are some chosen and others cast out? Matters of faith, my son, must be studied by the light of faith, in the manner prescribed unto thee by the Scriptures; further than this thou mayest not go, lest thou shouldst stumble.

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[1] "Prediche sul Salmo *Quam bonus:*" Prato, Guasti, 1846. *Vide* Predica iv. p. 237. These sermons were reported *verbatim*. After their delivery in the Duomo, Savonarola wrote them out in Latin in a somewhat abbreviated form, as may be ascertained from the holograph codex at St. Mark's. They were afterwards translated and published in an amended form by Girolamo Giannotti during the sixteenth century. In every edition of them we have seen we find the statement that they were delivered in Advent, 1493, and we accordingly mention them in this chapter. But it should be noted that, in his "Compendium Revelationum," Savonarola states that during every Lent and Advent from 1491 to 1494, he always preached from the Book of Genesis.

[2] Ibid.

Who art thou to make answer unto God? Hath not the potter power over the clay, to knead from the same mass vessels of honour or vessels for base uses? God shows mercy to the elect, justice to the wicked. But shouldst thou ask wherefore God hath predestined this man rather than that, wherefore John is chosen rather than Peter? Then I shall tell thee that such is the will of God, nor can any other answer be given. Origen sought to overstep these limits, and said that predestination depended upon the merits of another life anterior to this. The Pelagians declared it to depend upon our good deeds in this life; for, according to those heretics, the principle of well-doing is in ourselves, its consummation and perfection coming from God. They sought to pass the bounds assigned to us, and fell into heresy. The Scriptures are very plain: they tell us, not in one place, but in many, that not only the end of well-doing, but likewise its beginning, cometh to us from God; even as in all our good works it is God who works through us. "It is therefore untrue that the grace of God is obtained by pre-existing works and merits, that through them we are predestined to everlasting life, as though works and merits were the cause of predestination, *cum sit*, it is all the contrary, for works and merits are the effect of predestination, and the Divine will the cause of predestination, as we have before said."[1]

"Tell me, O Peter, tell me, O Magdalen, wherefore are ye in Paradise? Ye sinned even as we sin. Thou, Peter, who hadst testified unto the Son of God, hadst conversed with Him, heard Him preach, beheld His miracles, and, alone, with two other disciples, hadst beheld His transfiguration on Mount Tabor, hearkened unto His paternal voice, and who, despite all this, at the word of a base woman didst deny Him thrice, yet thou wert restored to grace, and made the head of the Church, and dost now enjoy heavenly bliss; how hast thou gained these guerdons? Confess that not by thine own merits hast thou attained salvation, but by the goodness of God, who didst bestow so many blessings on thee, and vouchsafed to thee in this life so much light and grace. And thou, Magdalen, vulgarly called the sinner, thou didst hearken many times to the preaching of thy master Jesus Christ, and nevertheless wert deaf to His words; and although Martha, thy sister, didst admonish thee and exhort thee to change thy life, thou didst heed her not. But when it pleased unto the Lord, and He touched thy heart, thou didst hasten as in a frenzy, with thy vase of alabaster, to the house of the Pharisee, and casting thyself at thy sweet Master's feet, didst bathe them with thy tears, and wast deemed worthy to hear the sweet words—'*Dimittuntur tibi peccata multa.*' Later, thou wast so favoured by the Saviour as to be the first to behold Him risen from the dead, and wert made an apostle unto the Apostles. This grace, these gifts, were not vouchsafed to thee for thy deserts, O Mary! but because God loved thee and willed thy salvation."[1]

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[1] Predica, viii. pp. 299-302.

By limiting ourselves to quotations of this kind without giving their context, it would be very easy to find evidence supporting the theories of those German and English writers who have sought to prove that Savonarola was a precursor of the reformed doctrine of justification by faith alone, without works; the believer being little more than a passive instrument in the hand of the Lord, at whose good pleasure he is either chosen, or rejected without being able to attain to salvation by freewill. Certainly Savonarola was most profoundly convinced of the nullity of the creature before the Creator; and in his submission to the Divine will he earnestly sought to enforce the same conviction on his hearers. But that is no reason for tampering with the fundamental points of his creed, which he so often reiterated and so clearly explained, as to leave us in no doubt concerning them. In fact, no sooner were his works thoroughly examined than the foreign authors to whom we have referred were convicted of error by their own countrymen.[1]

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[1] Predica, ix. p. 323.

The necessity of good works, freewill, and the co-operation of human effort with grace, even although the latter be a free gift from God, are arguments to which Savonarola constantly recurs, and without failing to add that not only is it in our power, but that it is also our duty, to prepare ourselves for the reception of this gift of faith and grace, which is never withheld from those who do their utmost to obtain it.[2] According to him, there are three things required to prepare and dispose us for its reception, namely, determined belief, prayer, and good works.[3] Consequently we must not condemn the sinner, but only his sins, and must have compassion on him; for so long as freewill and the grace of God endure, he may always turn to the Lord and be converted.[4] If any one ask why the will is free, we reply unto them, Because it is will.[5] Therefore man must needs co-operate in the act of justification, and do all that in him lies, for God will not fail him. Art thou fain, my brother, to receive the love of Jesus Christ? Seek, then, to hearken unto the Divine voice that calleth thee. Daily the Lord calleth unto thee, Do thou also somewhat for thyself."[6]

When very young Savonarola had adopted this motto:

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[1] Rudelbach ("Savonarola und seine Zeit," chap. iii. of part 3; "Savonarola's dogmatischer Standpunct"). This author is undoubtedly the staunchest supporter of the former opinion; but even in Germany has been victoriously confuted by Herr Meier, who, although anxious to prove that Savonarola was a Protestant, has tried to modify to some extent the exaggerations of Herr Rudelbach.

[2] Sermon iv. pp. 237, 238.

[3] Sermon v. p. 246.

[4] Sermon xii. p. 373.

[5] Sermon xiv. p. 399.

[6] Sermon xvi. p. 443.

"*Tanto sa ciasenno quanto opera*" ("As much as one knows, so much one does").[1] And truly we should be disposed to entitle his doctrine the doctrine of works, were it not rather the doctrine of love, taking the word in the acceptation given to it above, *i.e.*, as the state in which a soul, being already spontaneously disposed to grace, feels its approach and is inflamed with charity. "This love," Savonarola tells us, "is likewise a gift of the Lord; it is a fire that kindleth all dry things, and whoever is disposed unto it shall forthwith find it descend into his heart and set it aflame. Earnest love is truly a great might, for it can do all things, overcome and conquer all things. . . . Nought can be done save by the impulse of love. . . . And inasmuch as charity is the greatest love of all, therefore charity worketh great and marvellous things. Charity easily and sweetly fulfilleth the whole law of God, being the measure and rule of all measures and of all laws. For, in fact, every individual law is the measure and rule of some special action and of no other; but it is not thus with charity, which is the measure and rule of all things and of all human acts. And therefore he that hath this rule of charity ruleth well both himself and others, and interpreteth all laws rightly. This is clearly proved when we find that those charged with the cure of souls allow themselves to be guided solely by that which is written in the canonical laws, which, being special laws, can never rule justly without charity, the universal measure and law. Take, for example, the physician that bringeth love and charity to the sick, for, if he be good and kind, and learned and skilful, none can be better than he. Thou wilt see that love teacheth him everything, and will be the measure and rule of all the measures and rules of medicine. He will endure a thousand fatigues as though they were of no account, will inquire into everything, and will order his remedies and see them prepared, and will never leave the sick man. If instead, gain be his object, he will have no care for the sufferer, and his very skill will fail him." "Behold what love can effect. Take the example of a mother with the child. Who hath taught this young woman, who hath had no children before, to nurse her babe? Love. See what fatigue she endureth by day and by night to rear it, and how the heaviest fatigue seemeth light to her. What is the cause of this? It is love. See what ways she hath, what loving caresses and sweet words for this little babe of hers! What hath taught her these things? Love. . . . Take the example of Christ who, moved by the deepest charity, came to us as a little child, in all things like unto the sons of men, and submitting to hunger and thirst, to heat and cold and discomfort. What hath urged Him to do this? Love. He spoke now with just men, now with publicans and sinners, and He led a life that all men and all women, small and great, rich and poor, may imitate, all after their own way and according to their condition, and thus undoubtedly win their salvation. . . . And what made Him lead so poor and marvellous a life? Undoubtedly, charity. . . . Charity bound Him to the pillar, charity led Him to the cross, charity raised Him from the dead and made Him ascend into heaven, and thus accomplish all the mysteries of our redemption. This is the true and only doctrine, but in these days the preachers teach nought but empty subtleties." [1]

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[1] All the biographers give this as his motto, and it is repeated in his Sermons. See, for instance, Sermon v., on the Book of Job.

He then goes on to speak of the clergy. "They tickle men's ears with talk of Aristotle and Plato, Virgil and Petrarch, and take no concern in the salvation of souls. Why, instead of expounding so many books, do they not expound the one Book in which is the law and spirit of life! The Gospel, O Christians, ye should ever have with ye; not merely the letter, but the spirit of the Gospel. For if thou lackest the spirit of grace, what will it avail thee to carry about the whole book. And, again, still greater is the foolishness of those that load themselves with briefs and tracts and writings, so that they are like unto stalls at a fair. Charity doth not consist in written papers! The true books of Christ are the Apostles and the Saints; the true reading of them is to imitate their lives. But in these days men are made books of the devil. They speak against pride and ambition, yet are plunged in both up to the eyes; they preach chastity, and maintain concubines; they prescribe fasting, and feast splendidly themselves. Those are useless books, false books, bad books, and books of the devil, for the devil hath filled them with his malice."[1] "These prelates exult in their dignities and despise others; these are they that would be feared and reverenced; these are they that seek the highest places in the synagogues, the chief pulpits of Italy. They seek to show themselves by day in the public squares, and be saluted, and called masters and rabbis, they make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the hems of their garments;[2] they spit roundly; step gravely and expect their slightest nod to be obeyed."[3]

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[1] Sermon ii. pp. 208-210.

From the prelates he goes on to describe the princes of Italy. "These wicked princes are sent to chastise the sins of their subjects; they are truly a sad snare for souls; their courts and palaces are the refuge of all the beasts and monsters of the earth, for they give shelter to ribalds and malefactors. These wretches flock to their halls because it is there that they find ways and means to satisfy their evil passions and unbridled lusts. There are the false councillors, who continually devise new burdens and new taxes to drain the blood of the people. There are the flattering philosophers and poets, who, by force of a thousand lies and fables, trace the genealogy of those evil princes back to the gods; but, and worse than all, there are the priests who follow in the same course. This is the city of Babylon, O my brethren, the city of the foolish and the impious, the city that will be destroyed of the Lord."[1]

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[1] Sermon vii. 271–275.

[2] "Dilatant enim philacteria sua, et magnificant fimbrias" (Matthew xxiii. 5). Phylacteries are strips of skin, with a capsule also of skin, containing a parchment inscribed with some passages of the Pentateuch. The Jews wear these round the left arm and on the forehead, when reciting the early morning prayers, on certain days of the week.

[3] Sermon viii. p. 296.

He then minutely describes the construction of this city, which was erected by the twelve follies of the impious. "They behold light and darkness, and they prefer darkness to light; they find an easy way and a rough and perilous way; and they prefer the latter to the former. Behold, now they plunge into the sea and mount upon a whale, which they believe to be a rock, and they settle upon it. What generation of men is this? What purpose can be theirs? especially, as I would have ye to know that they intend to build a city on the whale's back. What do ye? I say. Ye will weigh down the beast and will drown. Nevertheless they labour and dispute, build fortifications and come to blows, and one seeks to subjugate the other, and finally there arises a tyrant to oppress them all. He persecutes his enemies to the death, has spies everywhere, hence there are fresh wars and fresh dissensions. At last, the whale, wearied by all this tumult, makes a plunge, and thereupon all are drowned, and the city of Babylon is destroyed. Thus," concludes Savonarola, "it is made manifest that the impious perish by the labours of the foolish, and that the foolish shall be chastised."[2]

It was very easy to see that by this city of fools

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[1] Sermon x. pp. 344–345.

[2] Sermon xiii. pp. 382–384.

Savonarola had dared to symbolize the rule of Piero de' Medici and his friends, which, according to the friar's predictions, was soon to be overthrown. But he did not stop here. After speaking of the corruption of the people and princes of Italy, he again touched with equal audacity on the much graver subject of the priesthood and the Church. Giving a very strange interpretation to certain words of the Bible, he said: "*In securi et in ascia deiecerunt eam*—When the devil sees that a man is weak, he strikes him with a hatchet in order to make him fall into sin; but if he sees that he is strong, he then strikes him with an axe. If a young girl be modest and well brought up, he throws some dissipated youth in her way, and causes her to yield to his flatteries and fall into sin. Thus the devil strikes her with his axe. Here is a citizen of good repute; he enters the courts of the great lords, and there is the axe so well sharpened, that no virtue can resist its strokes. But we are now living in still more evil days; the devil has called his followers together, and they have dealt terrible blows on the very gates of the temple. It is by the gates that the house is entered, and it is the prelates who should lead the faithful into the Church of Christ. Therefore the devil hath aimed his heaviest blows at them, and hath broken down these gates. Thus it is that no more good prelates are to be found in the Church." "Seest thou not that they do all things amiss? They have no judgment; they cannot distinguish *inter bonum et malum, inter verum et falsum, inter dulce et amarum*; good things they deem evil, true things false, sweet things bitter, and *vice versâ*. . . . See, how in these days prelates and preachers are chained to the earth by love of earthly things; the cure of souls is no longer their concern; they are content with the receipt of revenue; the preachers preach for the pleasure of princes, to be praised and magnified by them. . . . And they have done even worse than this, inasmuch as they have not only destroyed the Church of God, but built up another after their own fashion. This is the new Church, no longer built of living rock, namely, of Christians steadfast in the living faith and in the mould of charity; but built of sticks, namely, of Christians dry as tinder for the fires of hell. . . . Go thou to Rome and throughout Christendom; in the mansions of the great prelates and great lords, there is no concern save for poetry and the oratorical art. Go thither and see, thou shalt find them all with books of the humanities in their hands, and telling one another that they can guide men's souls by means of Virgil, Horace, and Cicero. Wouldst thou see how the Church is ruled by the hands of astrologers? And there is no prelate nor great lord that hath not intimate dealings with some astrologer, who fixeth the hour and the moment in which he is to ride out or undertake some piece of business. For these great lords venture not to stir a step save at their astrologer's bidding. . . .

"But in this temple of theirs there is one thing that delighteth us much. This is that all therein is painted and gilded. Thus our Church hath many fine outer ceremonies for the solemnization of ecclesiastical rites, grand vestments and numerous draperies, with gold and silver candlesticks, and so many chalices that it is a majestic sight to behold. There thou seest the great prelates with splendid mitres of gold and precious stones on their heads, and silver crosiers in hand; there they stand at the altar, decked with fine copes and stoles of brocade, chanting those beautiful vespers and masses, very slowly, and with so many grand ceremonies, so many organs and choristers, that thou art struck with amazement; and all these priests seem to thee grave and saintly men, thou canst not believe that they may be in error, but deem that all which they say and do should be obeyed even as the Gospel; and thus is our Church conducted. Men feed upon these vanities and rejoice in these pomps, and say that the Church of Christ was never so flourishing, nor divine worship so well conducted as at present . . . . likewise that the first prelates were inferior to these of our own times. . . . The former, it is true, had fewer gold mitres and fewer chalices, for, indeed, what few they possessed were broken up to relieve the needs of the poor; whereas our prelates, for the sake of obtaining chalices, will rob the poor of their sole means of support. But dost thou know what I would tell thee? In the primitive Church the chalices were of wood, the prelates of gold; in these days the Church hath chalices of gold and prelates of wood. These have introduced devilish games among us; they have no belief in God, and jeer at the mysteries of our faith! What doest Thou, O Lord? Why dost Thou slumber? Arise, and come to deliver Thy Church from the hands of the devils, from the hands of tyrants, the hands of iniquitous prelates. Hast Thou forsaken Thy Church? Dost Thou not love her? Is she not dear unto Thee? O Lord, we are become the despised of all nations; the Turks are masters of Constantinople; we have lost Asia, have lost Greece, we already pay tribute to the Infidel. O Lord God, Thou hast dealt with us as a wrathful father, Thou hast cast us out from Thy presence! Hasten then the chastisement and the scourge, that it may be quickly granted us to return to Thee.[1] *Effunde iras tuas in gentes.* Be ye not scandalized, O my brethren, by these words; rather, when ye see that the righteous desire chastisement, know that it is because they seek to banish evil, so that the kingdom of our Blessed Lord, Jesus Christ, may flourish in the world. The only hope that now remains to us, is that the sword of God may soon smite the earth."[2]

[1] Sermon xxiii. pp. 562–572.

[2] Sermon xxiii. pp. 578–579. We find the same idea repeated in many of these sermons, of which indeed it is the principal theme.

Thus Savonarola devoted this Advent to preaching on morals, politics, religion, and the Church; he inveighed against the princes and clergy, and came to the conclusion that the scourge was at hand, and was to be desired by the righteous. In this way, after expounding his doctrines, the Friar threw down the gauntlet in defiance of all earthly potentates. All princes, both temporal and spiritual, all the wealthy, all ecclesiastical dignitaries and worldly rulers were equally attacked by him. "I am like unto the hail," he said, "which pelts every one who is out in the open air." Consequently, these sermons of 1493, although by no means the most eloquent and daring of Savonarola's discourses, are those most completely representative of his whole train of thought. They bring him before us not only as an acute theologian and fearless denouncer of the corruptions of the Church, but also as the declared champion of liberty and the people.

It is impossible to ascertain the precise nature of his Lenten sermons in the year 1494, but during the autumn he carried on and concluded the famous series of sermons on Noah's Ark (*Prediche sopra l'Arca di Noè*), begun, as we have seen, in Lent, 1492. Thus, we find both series printed together in the same volume. They are mentioned by all the biographers, who are unanimous as to the strong impression these sermons made on the people; how they amazed and transported all hearers, and how strangely the predictions contained in them had been fulfilled. But, unfortunately, it is very difficult for us to pass any decisive judgment on them, the edition being so faulty and incomplete, as to have lost almost every characteristic of Savonarola's style. Their reporter, unable to keep pace with the preacher's words, only jotted down rough and fragmentary notes. These were afterwards translated into barbarous dog-Latin—by way of giving them a more literary form—and published in

Venice.[1] For this reason Quétif and some other writers entertained doubts of their authenticity. It is true that they are in too confused a condition for continuous reading; nevertheless the ideas expounded, or rather referred to, in them are so evidently those of Savonarola, and the testimony of the biographers is so unmistakably clear, that it is impossible to share Mons. Quétif's doubts.

Having demonstrated in his previous sermons on Genesis the necessity and approach of chastisement, Savonarola now devoted this next series to the representation of a mystical Ark, in which all should take refuge who wished to escape the coming flood. In the literal sense, this was the Ark of Noah as described in Genesis, while in the allegorical sense it portrayed the gathering together of the righteous: its length representing faith; its width, charity; its height, hope. He enlarged upon this strange allegory during the whole of Lent, 1492, and giving each day a different interpretation of the ten planks of which the Ark was composed, again expounded the virtues good Christians were bound to possess and the duties they should fulfil. Finally, on Easter morning, he declared the Ark to be complete, and ended his sermon with the following words: "Let all hasten to enter into the Lord's Ark! Noah invites ye all to-day, the door stands open; but a time will come when the Ark will be closed, and many will repent in vain of not having entered therein." In these Lenten discourses, and also in some others, he continued to dilate on the threatened scourges, and foretold the coming of a new Cyrus, who would march through Italy in triumph, without encountering any obstacles, and without breaking a single lance. We find numerous records of these predictions, and the terrors excited by them, in the historians and biographers of the period, and Frà Benedetto reports his master's words in the following verses :—

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[1] Venetiis, in officina divi Bernardini, 1536. The volume contains the forty-three Lenten sermons, and the thirteen others erroneously supposed to have been given in Advent. Both sets were also published separately, the same year, in Venice. In order to understand how many gaps occur in them, it is necessary to read the sermons before looking at the remarks made on them by their editor, and by the publisher of the "Sermons on Job."

Presto vedrai summerso ogni tiranno,
  E tutta Italia vedrai conquassata
Con sua vergogna e vituperio e danno.
Roma, tu sarai presto captivata ;
  Vedo venir in te coltel dell' ira,
El tempo è breve e vola ogni giornata.

* * * * * *

Vuol renovare la Chiesa el mio Signore,
  E convertir ogni barbara gente,
E sarà un ovile et un pastore.
  Ma prima Italia fatta fia dolente,
E tanto sangue in essa s'ha a versare,
  Che rara fia per tutto la sua gente.[1]

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[1] Frà Benedetto, "Cedrus Libani," a little poem published and edited by Padre Marchese in the "Archivio Storico Italiano," Appendix to vol. vii. pp. 59–95. *Vide* chap. ii : "Summary of the prophecies which the compiler heard delivered by the prophet Ieronimo in expounding the subject of Noah's Ark, at a time when no one was in dread of any tribulation."

The following is a literal translation of the verses :—

Soon shalt thou see each tyrant overthrown,
And all Italy shalt thou see vanquished,
To her shame, disgrace, and harm.
Thou, Rome, shalt soon be captured :
I see the blade of wrath come upon thee,
The time is short, each day flies past.

* * * * * *

My Lord will renovate the Church,
And convert every barbarian people.
There will be but one fold and one shepherd.
But first Italy will have to mourn,
And so much of her blood will be shed,
That her people shall everywhere be thinned

So extraordinary was the effect produced by these sermons on the whole public, that every day greater numbers thronged to the Duomo. Savonarola seemed to be the most important personage in Florence, and Piero de' Medici could no longer restrain his uneasiness. But it was a matter of general surprise that the Friar should devote so much time to the building of the Ark, and that even on resuming the same theme in the autumn of 1494, his exposition of this short chapter of Genesis should still be left unfinished. He has said himself that he could not explain his own slowness, and that some superior power seemed to be holding him back. Suddenly, however, he hurried to a conclusion.[1] The third of these sermons was to treat of the 17th verse of chap. vi., describing the Deluge, and it was given on September 21, destined to be a memorable day for Savonarola and Florence. The Duomo was scarcely large enough to contain the vast crowd which had been waiting since the early morning in a state of great excitement and expectation. At last the preacher mounted the pulpit, and on looking round upon his hearers and noting the extraordinary agitation prevailing amongst them, cried out in a terrible voice: "*Ecce ego adducam aquas super terram!*" His voice resounded through the church with the strength of a thunder-clap; his words seemed to impress all present with a strange alarm. Pico della Mirandola said that he felt a cold shiver run through him, and that his hair stood on end; and Savonarola has also declared that he himself was no less moved than his hearers.[2]

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[1] The Venetian editor calls this series of thirteen sermons "Advent Sermons," makes them precede the forty-three Lenten discourses, and prints them all with the same inaccuracies: Venetiis in officina divi Bernardini, 1536. But the "Advent Sermons" of 1493 were those on the Psalm *Quam bonus*, and in Advent 1494, Savonarola preached on Haggai. The thirteen sermons on the Ark should therefore follow, not precede, the Lenten series (1492), as will be clearly seen on perusal.

[2] "He had preached in Santa Liperata (an old name for the Duomo),

The extraordinary agitation of the Florentine public is easily explained. Unexpectedly as a thunderclap from a clear sky, came the news that a flood of foreign soldiery was pouring down from the Alps to the conquest of Italy. And rumour, with its usual exaggeration, declared the invaders to be an innumerable host, of gigantic stature, great ferocity, and invincible strength. All felt taken unawares. Excepting the King of Naples, not one of the Italian princes was in the least prepared for resistance: the native armies were very feeble, the foreign forces hostile; and all men were so overwhelmed by terror, that they already seemed to see blood flowing on all sides. Accordingly the people thronged to the Duomo, as though to seek aid from Savonarola. For all his words were now verified: the sword of God had come down upon earth; the threatened chastisements had begun. The Friar alone had foreseen the future; he alone would know the remedy for all this disaster. Hence all Italy rang with his name; all eyes were turned towards him, and, by the irresistible force of events, he was almost instantaneously transformed into a political authority. The whole population applied to him, the most influential citizens sought his advice; and as if by magic his followers became masters of the town. But by this time, so total a change had taken place in the affairs of Florence and of Italy in general, that it is necessary to go back a little, and explain at length in what manner this change had been wrought.

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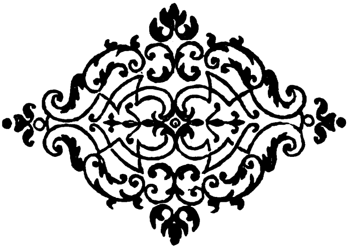
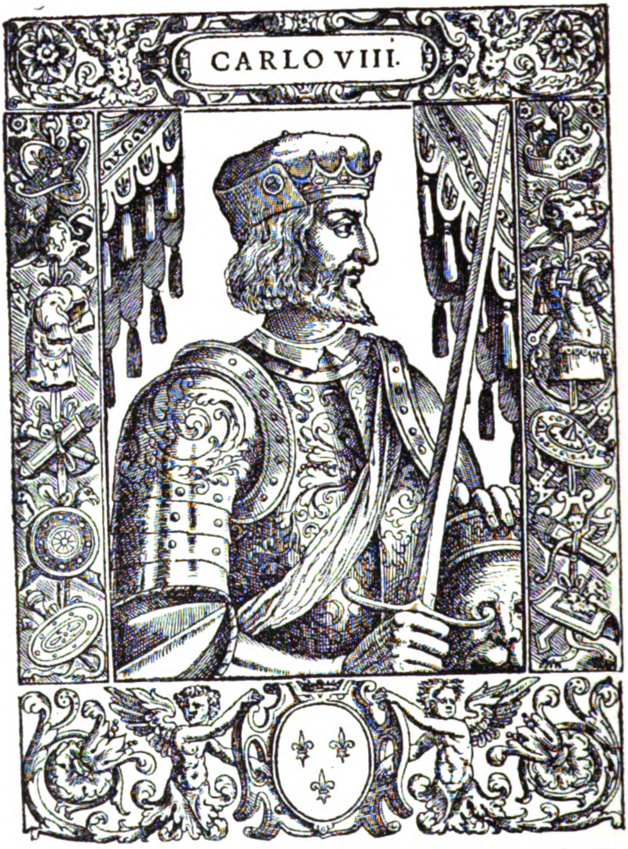
and closed the Ark just before the descent of the French king into Italy, with certain sermons so full of terrors and alarms, cries and lamentations, that every one went about the city bewildered, speechless, and, as it were, half-dead." (Cerretani, "Storia," an autograph MS. loc. cit. sheet 185. See, too, the "Compendium Revelationum," loc. cit.)



BOOK II.

CHAPTERS I.—VII.

(1494–1495.)



CARLO VIII. Re di Francia acquiſtò il Regno di Napoli, cacciandone Ferrante II. e lo tenne da vn'anno, e mezo.

CHAPTER I.

THE COMING OF THE FRENCH INTO ITALY.

(1494.)

AFTER the death of Lorenzo de' Medici, and the election of Alexander VI., the state of affairs in Italy grew rapidly worse. The Borgian Pontiff, with his devouring ambition to create principalities for his children, turned a greedy eye on every feeble or timid potentate; he made and unmade treaties, alliances, and solemn engagements, and was ready to expose Italy and the whole of Europe to any catastrophe, in order to gain his ends.[1] No less dangerous was the temper of Ludovico the Moor, for he was equally dominated by fear and ambition. His duplicity and bad faith were notorious throughout Italy; he concluded treaties only to violate them at the first opportunity; sometimes, indeed, in the act of signing them he was scheming how best to break the contract, should it seem expedient to do so. He prided himself on being the craftiest man in Italy, and was incessantly weaving fresh designs and fresh plots in order to strengthen his sovereignty, crush his enemies, and increase his power. And when suffering from attacks of fear, all his mental faculties were quickened and developed into a kind of spasmodic activity; so that at these moments it was impossible for any one to foretell what he would decide to do next.[1] Unfortunately, both for himself and for Italy, he was a prey to fear at the time of which we are now speaking, and consequently in a state of continual suspense.

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[1] Machiavelli, "Legazioni"; Francesco Guicciardini, "Storia d'Italia"; Sismondi, "Hist. des Répub. Ital."; Michelet, "Renaissance." All historians and Italian ambassadors are unanimous on this point. See, too, De Cherrier, "Hist. de Charles VIII." Paris: Didier, 1868. Two Vols.

He had made himself lord of Milan by an act of cruel usurpation; he kept his nephew, Giovan Galeazzo, the rightful duke, a prisoner at Pavia, and has been suspected of having compassed his death by slow poison. The young man was already weak and ailing, and his strength daily declined. Accordingly he could make no attempt to resist his uncle; but his wife, Isabella of Aragon, daughter of Alphonso of Naples, refused to submit tamely to the loss of their rights, and the humiliating confinement imposed by their usurper. Therefore she proclaimed her grievances to all Italy, and repeatedly summoned her father and grandfather to come to avenge her wrongs and replace herself and husband at the head of their State. King Ferdinand and his son Alphonso, sovereigns of a vast kingdom and proud of the military renown they had won in their wars with the Barons, and at the siege of Otranto, treated the Moor with the utmost contempt. In their despatches they addressed him either as the Duke of Bari, or merely as Messer

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[1] "Le dit Seigneur Ludovic estoit homme très sage, mais fort craintif et bien souple quand il avait peur (j'en parle comme de celuy que j'ai congnu et beaucoup de choses traicté avec luy) et homme sans foy, s'il voyait son profit pour la rompre" (Philippe de Comines, "Mémoires," &c., bk. vii. chap. ii. p. 491. Paris: Rollin, 1747). Excepting when quoting from this author we shall refer to him under his real name of Commines.

Ludovico,[1] and they continually threatened to deprive him of his ill-gotten power, and restore it to Isabella and Galeazzo. It is impossible to describe the agonies of fear endured by Ludovico at these moments, nor the wild plans he conceived. Had it been in his power, he would have unhesitatingly set all Italy and the whole world on fire, in order to be freed from these alarms.

Lorenzo de' Medici had always shown much prudence in acting as mediator between the two parties, and while preserving his own neutrality, maintaining friendly relations with both. He contrived to effect this by means of a kind of political see-saw, and was therefore styled by his contemporaries the beam of the Italian scales. As early as 1480 he had concluded a treaty of union between the States of Naples, Milan, and Florence; and later, by throwing his weight alternately to this side and that, had always contrived to keep this alliance intact.[2] But after his death the aspect of affairs instantly changed, and Ludovico's first thought was to test in some way the disposition of his allies. He therefore proposed that, to do honour to the newly-elected Pope, the ambassadors from the three courts should go to Rome at the same moment, and be presented together as friends to Alexander. But Piero de' Medici, being desirous to figure as the head of a special embassy from Florence, for which he had already made splendid preparations, induced the King of Naples to find some excuse for rejecting Ludovico's proposal. Ferdinand eagerly seized the opportunity to wound his personal enemy, giving him to understand, at the same time, that it was in compliance with the wishes of Piero. It is difficult to imagine to what an extent Ludovico's suspicions were aroused by this reply. And before long he was forced to regard it as a token of profound and general hostility, and of his own isolation in Italy, inasmuch as the Orsini had accepted commands in the pay of the Neapolitan king, and already won Piero de' Medici over to their side. Accordingly Ludovico began to give serious attention to his own safety, and could not rest until he finally hit upon the plan of inviting the French to undertake the conquest of the Neapolitan kingdom. This proved to be the beginning of the long string of disasters which was to desolate Italy for ages to come, destroy her commercial prosperity, stifle her literary and scientific culture, and extinguish every spark of her liberty. Ludovico undoubtedly gave the first impetus to these woes, but he has been unjustly execrated as almost the sole author of events for which, in truth, the way had long been prepared. He has thus been raised to an historical importance, to which even the evil he wrought upon his country can give him no claim.

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[1] These despatches, chiefly written by Pontano, are of great importance. We found them in the Neapolitan Archives and have made use of them in the present work. One is given, as a specimen, in the Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xviii. The whole collection has since been published, in four volumes, by the Directors of the Archives, in the "Codice Aragonese." Naples, 1866–74.

[2] This is not only affirmed by the historians, but clearly proved by Lorenzo's published and unpublished correspondence.

Italy had been so worn out by the over-active and restless life of preceding times, that now, in the fifteenth century, she had fallen into a state of premature decrepitude, was politically aged, divided, and feeble. Great and powerful States had sprung up around her, and were rapidly gaining maturity and strength. The Turks, now at the height of their power, had already established a firm foothold in Europe, and were threatening Italy and the whole Western continent, both by sea and by land. Spain had united the kingdoms of Aragon and Castille, expelled the Moors, and, guided by the daring genius of Christopher Columbus, was already traversing the Atlantic. In France the iron despotism of Louis XI. had lowered the aristocracy and raised the people, re-established the finances, united the country, and extended its frontiers towards the Rhine and the Pyrenees. At the same time the decease of René of Anjou, by giving the French king possession of that Duchy and Provence, had invested him with all the boasted rights of the Angevins to the Neapolitan throne. Germany, although apparently weakened by the feeble and vacillating rule of Maximilian I., was nevertheless developing increased energy as a military power. And lastly the Swiss, now the best foot soldiers of Europe, were ready to cross the Alps in formidable numbers at the bidding of any paymaster.

At this moment, partly from consciousness of their own strength, spirit of enterprise, desire for advanced civilization, but, above all, from a certain national jealousy, all these races were disposed to attack Italy. They deemed it unpardonable that Italy should still be the world's preceptress; that students from all parts of Europe should flock to her universities; that she should be the sole centre of art and literature; that her manners should be imitated, her language studied in every Court throughout Christendom; that the writers, artists, philosophers, physicians, astrologers, and navigators of Italy should still surpass all others in glory, as much as her princes and merchants eclipsed all others in wealth. Hence the mingled sentiment of love and hate that instinctively attracted the rest of Europe to Italy. And as Italy scattered the seeds of culture all over the world, while no longer able to conquer by force, it was inevitable that she should now be conquered. In fact, during the fifteenth century *the Italian enterprise* was regarded by Europe in the light of a crusade; captains and statesmen expected to reap from it precious and easy victories; scholars looked to it as to a revelation of the world of art and science; soldiers dreamt of the rich booty to be gleaned from the sack of palaces and villas;

and all coveted the blue skies and fruitful soil of Italy.[1]

But of all these nations, the first destined to pass the Alps was inevitably the French. The position of France, in the centre of Europe and on the confines of Italy, the temper of her people, her political and military standing—everything, in short, summoned her to the van of the mighty movement that was to bring life to Europe by Italy's death. Besides, at this juncture France had a new sovereign, Charles VIII., a youth of twenty-two years, filled with a strange passion for adventure. Of weakly constitution, stunted and almost deformed, scarcely able to read the alphabet, and devoid both of judgment and prudence, he was eager to rule, while incapable of maintaining his authority even over his courtiers.[2] He was always surrounded by men of low origin, who, by winning his favour, were raised to the highest dignities of the State; and these satellites continually stirred his childish ambition to emulate the deeds of St. Louis of France, and immortalize his name by a crusade against the Turks, of which the conquest of Naples was to be the first step. And while these men were urging him to assert the claim to the Neapolitan throne, supposed to have devolved upon the sovereign of France from the House of Anjou,[3] the Neapolitan exiles were always at his side striving to direct his ambition to the same end. The princes of Salerno and Bisignano, who had escaped the massacre of the Neapolitan Barons, were incessantly declaiming against the cruel tyranny of Ferdinand and Alphonso, declaring that there was a powerful Angevin party in the kingdom, and that King Charles would be welcomed with open arms by the population at large. In fact the distressed condition of the Neapolitans was a matter of universal notoriety; and, apart from the exaggerations of the exiles, it was also true that there was a general desire for a change of some sort.

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[1] Guicciardini, Sismondi, Leo, &c. The subject is treated in Michelet's "Renaissance" in terms of great eloquence and originality. See also De Cherrier, op. cit.

[2] The character of Charles VIII. is admirably described in Guicciardini's "Storia d'Italia," vol. i. p. 87. See also De Cherrier's remarks on it in his "Histoire de Charles VIII.," and those of Nardi, Parenti, and Cerretani in their respective histories of Florence. But the best author to consult on this period of history is Philippe de Comines (from whose "Memoires" we have already quoted), who was one of the finest observers and diplomats of the fifteenth century.

[3] Gibbon once entertained the idea of writing the history of the descent of Charles VIII. into Italy; "an event," as he says, "which changed the face of Europe." In vol. iii. of his "Miscellaneous Works" (London, 1814) he gives the scheme of this projected history, and explains the nullity of the French pretensions to the Neapolitan throne.

Throughout the rest of Italy it was plain that all friends of liberty looked forward to the coming of the French with much greater pleasure than alarm. The easy and yielding temper of that people, and the known element of uncertainty and unexpectedness in their character, caused all to hope from them that which they most desired, so that every oppressed city or republic expected relief from its woes at the hands of the French. Louis XI. had been frequently solicited by this or that party to cross the Alps, and now that Ludovico the Moor was sending ambassadors to tempt Charles VIII., it appeared that even the Pope was by no means averse to the plan. Whether it was that Alexander wished to frighten the King of Naples, in order to make peace with him on more advantageous terms, or had let himself be ensnared by the subtle devices and crafty policy of the Moor, or merely, like so many others, hoped in the unknown, it is positive that he also encouraged the French to come down into Italy.[1]

Indeed, by a strange anomaly, the French invasion, fated to bring so many woes on our country, was, at that moment, positively desired by almost all Italians, and only opposed by the French. The Barons of France met in council and openly declared themselves adverse to so ill-judged and perilous an enterprise. No reliance, they said, could be placed on the aid of an ally such as the Moor, nor of a Pope so fickle and changeable as the Borgia; the forces of the Neapolitan king were no contemptible foes, and France, with her exhausted treasury, had no means of pursuing a lengthy campaign. At bottom, their chief distrust was in their own king, whom they judged to be quite unfit to be the leader of so great an enterprise. But Charles paid no heed to their advice, and allowed himself to be guided by two individuals who were totally unversed either in war or in statesmanship. One of these was Etienne de Vers, originally a lackey, and now Seneschal Beaucaire; the other, Guillaume Brissonet, a petty tradesman, first made Minister of Finance, and afterwards a cardinal. Incited by the hope of fresh gains, and the promises of Ludovico and the Pope, they were the only Frenchmen who favoured the war, and urged Charles VIII. to undertake it.

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[1] Guicciardini, "Storia d'Italia"; "Codice Aragonese" (previously quoted); De Cherrier, op. cit.; Michelet, "Renaissance"; Sismondi, "Histoire des Français."

The monarch finally dismissed the agents of the Neapolitan king and sent four envoys to ascertain the intentions of the other Italian States. But they received no real sympathy from any of the Governments: the Venetian Republic was neutral; Piero de' Medici entirely devoted to the House of Aragon, and the Pope, in spite of his invitation to the French, had now changed his views, and seemed to be on the Neapolitan side. King Ferdinand had done his utmost to win Borgia's friendship as soon as his own fortunes were threatened with danger, but his lavish attentions and promises had produced no effect. He died on January 25, 1494, tormented by agonies of remorse, and his last hours were also embittered by the thought of bequeathing a tottering throne to his heirs. Thus, after a long and prosperous life, he ended his days —to use the words of a contemporary writer—*sine luce, sine cruce, sine Deo.*[1] But his son Alphonso made the most vigorous preparations for war, and, while collecting soldiers and re-organizing the fleet, succeeded in buying the Pope's alliance at the price of thirty thousand ducats to Alexander himself, and generous donations to his sons.[2]

But although the French envoys found that all the Italian powers, excepting Ludovico of Milan, were opposed to the coming of King Charles, they also ascertained that the masses regarded it very favourably. This was particularly the case in Florence. Savonarola, from the pulpit, boldly invited the new Cyrus to cross the Alps, and public opinion was decidedly friendly to the French and opposed to Piero de' Medici. The latter had been compelled to relegate his own cousins to their country houses because they had joined the popular party and declared their almost unanimous hostility to the Medicean rule, at the time when he had sent envoys to France to explain and justify his policy to Charles. Piero Capponi, always a man of extreme measures, had been one of these ambassadors, and had advised the king to expel all Florentine merchants from France, and by this severe blow to the material interests of the Republic, rouse the whole population against the Medici.[1]

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[1] Joh. Burcardi, "Diarium," recently edited by Mons. L. Thuasne (3 vols. Paris : Leroux, 1883-85). *Vide* to vol. ii. p. 89. This excellent work may be consulted with great profit for details of the period.

[2] Besides the authors already quoted, the reader may be referred to the Introduction of our own work on Machiavelli, &c., vol. i. p. 236 and fol., and likewise to Marin Sanuto's "La Spedizione di Carlo VIII. in Italia." This very important work, preceding the author's celebrated "Diarii," to which it serves as an introduction, is preserved in manuscript in the National Library of Paris. Finding that Venice had no copy of it, and that it was not generally known, we succeeded, by the aid of the Government, in having it sent to Italy on loan and copied in the "Archivio dei Frari." This copy is now in the Marcian Library at Venice. It was afterwards published by Professor R. Fulin in his "Archivio Veneto," and also in a separate form. (Venice, 1883.) Unfortunately the Paris MS. contains some inaccuracies which have been preserved in the printed version.

These things might have been supposed to hasten King Charles's movements, but, apparently, hesitation was his normal state of mind. When all was prepared, and the moment for action arrived, he always began to have doubts. Thus, no sooner was it ascertained that the masses had declared in his favour, than he instantly recognized the full difficulty of the undertaking. But now, while he was at Lyons, there came to him the Cardinal of St. Piero in Vincoli, who had escaped from the Castle of Ostia, where, after having defied and alarmed the Pope, he had been so strictly besieged and in such danger that he had been barely able to save his life by flight. He was the mortal enemy of Borgia, whom he always designated as a heretic and unbeliever, was one of the few cardinals who had refused to sell him their votes, and afterwards became Pope Julius II. For a long time he warred against Alexander with untiring energy, did his best to assemble a Council for the purpose of deposing him, and, in spite of his years, undauntedly faced every kind of danger and hardship. When admitted to the king's presence his fiery words swept away all Charles's doubts, and at last decided him to set forth towards Italy.[1]

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[1] "Memoires de Philippe de Commines," livre vi. chap. vi. p. 444. The author says that Piero de' Medici sent two embassies to Charles VIII., and that the Bishop of Arezzo and Piero Soderini formed part of the first. "A la seconde fois envoya le dit Pierre (de' Medici) à Lion, un appelé Pierre Cappon, et autres, et disoit pour excuse, comme javoit fait, que le roy Louys onziesme leur avoit commandé à Florence se mettre en ligue avec le roy Ferrand. . . . En tous les deux ambassades yavoit toujours quelq'un ennemy dudit de Medicis, et par especial cette fois le dit Pierre Cappon, qui soubz main advertissoit ce qu'on devoit faire pour tourner la cité de Florence contre le dit Pierre, et faisait sa charge plus aigre qu'elle n'estoit, et aussi conseilloit qu'on bannist tous les Florentins du royaume, et ainsi fu fait. Cecy je dis pour mieux vous faire entendre ce qui advint après ; car le Roy demoura en grande inimitié contre le dit Pierre ; et lesdits general et seneschal (Brissonet and Beaucaire) avoyent grande intelligence avec ses ennemis en ladite cité, et par especial avec ce Cappon, et avec deux cousins germains dudit Pierre, et de son nom propre." It is therefore plain, according to Commines, that Capponi was adverse to Piero de' Medici, by whom he had been sent to France. Baron Kervyn de Lettenhove says in his Lettres, &c., de Philippe de Commines (vol. ii. p. 98. Brussels, 1868), that the charge is doubtful, since Commines was not Capponi's friend. And this opinion is corroborated by others and supported by the fact that during this time Capponi's letters to Piero de' Medici always seemed to be written in a very friendly spirit. Nevertheless the orator, Francesco della Casa, who was sincerely attached to Piero de' Medici, wrote from Lyons at this time warning him to be on his guard against Capponi and Capponi's adherents. And in fact, directly Capponi returned to Florence, he showed himself to be one of the most determined opponents of the Medici. He was an extremely courageous man, but a somewhat inconsistent politician, and, as Guicciardini neatly said of him, "he sometimes wavered, and sometimes shammed" ("Storia Fiorentina," p. 140).

But first of all funds had to be provided, and money was very scarce in France just then, although Ludovico the Moor was ready to pay down 200,000 ducats, and had given his promise for more.[2] Meanwhile a loan was obtained at high interest from Genoese bankers, and the Crown jewels were pledged, together with those of several nobles of the Court. It was also requisite to arrange an agreement with Spain and the emperor, in order not to be attacked in the rear. Accordingly Charles concluded a treaty of alliance with the former Power, ceding Perpignan and the county of Roussillon, which had been gloriously gained to France by the hard-fought victories of Louis XI., and formed the key of the Pyrenean district. The county of Artois, also conquered by the late king, was yielded to Maximilian. The emperor's daughter was likewise restored to him, for although long repudiated by Charles, the latter had hitherto refused to send her back, in spite of her father's repeated demands. The French were naturally enraged by all these concessions. They considered the surrender of such important provinces a grave offence to the national honour, and that Charles had lowered the dignity of the country by his treaties and burdened it with new debts which it was in no position to redeem. Therefore every one augured ill of an enterprise disapproved by all captains and statesmen, and that could only be undertaken at the price of degrading acts of submission to neighbouring Powers. Nevertheless France had Providence on her side, and her fortunes were bound to prosper since Italy was incapable of resistance.

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[1] Guicciardini, "Storia d'Italia," vol. i. p. 58.
[2] Guicciardini, p. 83 and fol.; De Cherrier, vol. i. p. 351.

Our military strength was then very low, if not entirely extinguished, for the reputation gained by the troops of the Neapolitan king in their petty warfare against the Barons was not likely to stand the test of pitched battles. The celebrated Condottieri and free captains, who had formerly encountered foreign armies with so much honour, been the first to found the science of war, and instruct all Europe in modern strategy and tactics, had now ceased to exist. None of their best qualities had been inherited by their successors, who had converted war into a shameful trade, in which their chief concern was to get the highest pay without risking their skins. Those were the times of which Machiavelli said that two armies would often fight for hours without any one falling by the sword, and that the only men killed were those who were thrown down and trampled under the horses' hoofs.[1] In fact the chief strength of the Italian armies of the period lay in the cavalry, and the trooper and his horse were both so loaded with armour that, once down, neither could rise without help. The infantry, on the other hand, was too lightly armed, the arquebuse and pike having been only just introduced; so the foot soldiers fought in skirmishing form, or behind trenches and embankments, and, when drawn up in bands, formed so wide a line and so shallow a flank as to be very easily routed. The artillery consisted of a few heavy guns drawn by oxen, very difficult to load, and the large balls fired from them, being generally of stone, inflicted little damage on the foe.[1]

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[1] Of course Machiavelli's words are not to be taken quite literally, for though he often repeats the assertion, it was undoubtedly exaggerated. Nevertheless those were sad times when similar accusations could even be hazarded!

The French army, on the other hand, was a model to all Europe in the art of war. It had adopted all the latest improvements, and its main strength lay in the infantry, which, moving in large and compact bodies, and being excellently drilled, could execute many new and startling manœuvres, and be handled with the utmost rapidity. The vanguard consisted of eight thousand Swiss, and the strength of the cavalry force was increased by the spirit of emulation existing between the great French lords and the flower of Scottish chivalry who rode in its ranks. The French also used the best weapons which had then been invented. Their infantry were armed with shining halberds and pikes, and every thousand foot soldiers comprised one hundred arquebusiers. Besides culverins and falconets, they had thirty-six guns drawn by horses and mounted on four-wheeled carriages. Two of these wheels were detached when the pieces had to be placed in position. On the march the guns moved almost as quickly as the infantry, which was considered a great marvel in those days.[2] Every one talked of the prodigies to be expected from the French cannon; and the Florentine ambassadors had already given minute descriptions of "these fearsome things."[3]

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[1] In Porzio's "Congiura dei Baroni," bk. i. and ii., there is a minute and masterly description of Italian warfare at that period. See also Guicciardini, Sismondi, &c.

[2] Sismondi, "Hist. des Répub. Ital." and "Histoire des Français"; Michelet, "Renaissance"; Guicciardini, &c.

[3] Desjardin, vol. i. p. 400. A despatch from Vespucci and Capponi, dated June 8, 1494.

It is almost impossible to arrive at any certainty as to the number of the French forces, for the old writers are always very inexact in their figures, and their mode of counting by *men at arms*[1] greatly adds to the confusion. Nevertheless most of them calculate that King Charles's army consisted of 22,000 foot and 24,000 horse, and with the addition of all his other followers, and the Milanese soldiery that was to join him in Italy, his whole force must have amounted to 60,000 men.[2]

Meanwhile King Alphonso of Naples was actively preparing for war to the best of his strength. His brother, Don Frederic, was leading an army against Genoa, where the French fleet was assembled; Don Ferdinand, Duke of Calabria, together with the Count of Pitigliano and Gian Giacomo Trivulzi, two of the most renowned captains of the day, was advancing into Romagna to divert the war from the Neapolitan frontier.

This state of things made it imperative for King Charles to hasten his movements, and the very generals who had opposed the expedition were now anxious to begin it, being convinced that its difficulties would only be increased by delay. But at this juncture fresh doubts assailed the king. He was perplexed by a thousand uncertainties, and seemed, indeed, to have changed his intentions altogether, for some of his troops, who were already on the march, received orders to retrace their steps. Thereupon the Cardinal of St. Piero in Vincoli again sought his presence and addressed him in an almost violent tone. His Majesty, he said, was endangering not only his own honour, but that of the whole nation. His vehemence carried the day, and all hesitation was at an end.

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[1] A *man at arms* generally signified one mounted trooper, two bowmen, and two reserve horses, thus three men and five horses in all. But the number often varied, as also the numbers of the swarm of pages, workmen, attendants, and other supernumeraries added to the army.

[2] There are too many discrepancies on this point among the old historians for it to be worth while to quote them, all their calculations being made by hearsay, or at random. We have followed the computation given by Nardi and accepted by Sismondi, Michelet, and other modern writers.

So, at last, on the 22nd of August, 1494, the king set forth with his army, and crossing Monte Ginevra, halted at Asti, where he was met by Ludovico the Moor, together with his wife and the Duke of Ferrara.

But, amid festivities and women, Charles again forgot the war and indulged in so many excesses, that he fell seriously ill, and was detained at Asti for a month. He then went on to Pavia, where he found the unfortunate Giovan Galeazzo wasting away, bedridden, in the prime of his youth, and heard the lamentations of the prince's wife, who, casting herself sobbing at his feet, besought him to deliver them from their misery. The king appeared to be greatly moved and promised to give them effectual help. But he had hardly reached Piacenza before news arrived of the poor young prince's decease, and rumour added that he had been poisoned by his uncle, the Moor. The whole army was stirred to indignation by this event, for it revealed the nature of the ally with whom they had to deal. The king alone seemed to attach no importance to it. He had relapsed into his usual state of uncertainty, could not decide whether to march towards Romagna or through Tuscany, and meanwhile again halted in order to give himself up to fresh excesses.

During this time good news poured in from all sides of successes achieved by the French. The valiant General D'Aubigny, who had been sent to Romagna to hold the Neapolitans in check, had succeeded in harassing them so cruelly with his small force, that, without coming to a pitched battle, he had succeeded in driving them back across their own frontiers. At Genoa the Duke of Orleans with a powerful fleet had forced Don Frederic to withdraw his troops. At Rapallo the scanty Neapolitan garrison was surprised by a small body of Swiss, who effected a landing under cover of the ship's guns, sacked and fired the town, and although the garrison had surrendered, put them and all the inhabitants to the sword without even sparing forty sick persons, who were killed in their beds. The news of this deed spread indescribable terror throughout Italy, where warfare of so ferocious a kind was then unknown. The Neapolitan army beat a retreat; every city, down to the smallest town within range of the hostile fleet, expected to share the sad fate of Rapallo; the name of the French became a word of terror, and scarcely any resistance was offered to their advance.

About this time Piero de' Medici's cousins, Giovanni and Lorenzo, who had joined the popular party, and escaped from the villas to which they had been banished, arrived at the royal camp and assured the king that all Tuscany would welcome the passage of the French. Accordingly the army at last set out through the Lunigiana territory and skirted the banks of the Magra. On reaching Fivizzano they took its castle by assault, and rivalled the cruelties of the Swiss. But they soon discovered that their way was beset with dangers. They were in a barren district, shut in by mountains to the left; on the right lay the sea, where the enemy's vessels might appear at any moment; and before them rose the fortresses of Sarzana, Sarzanello, and Pietrasanta, which, even with scanty garrisons, were enough to check the advance of any army, no matter how formidable. Had Piero de' Medici possessed the courage to strike a bold blow, even at this moment, he might have inflicted on the French a severe and ignominious defeat. But their armies seemed to be miraculously guided by Providence to work our ruin, and, notwithstanding the blind indolence of their king, and their neglect of the most ordinary precautions, all was fated to go well with them.

Meanwhile the utmost confusion reigned in Florence. The popular party had always been favourable to France; but now, owing to Piero's mad policy, the king was advancing as an enemy, and devastating the land by fire and sword. What was to be done in this state of things? To open the road to the French, without first coming to terms with them, would be both imprudent and cowardly; while to refuse them passage would be equivalent to a declaration of war. The government of the city was still in the hand of the weak and incapable Piero, the sole cause of all these disturbances; accordingly every one waited to see what line of conduct he would adopt, and amid the general danger all took pleasure in witnessing his discomfiture. In fact Piero's position was the worst that could be conceived. The victorious enemy now drawing near was personally incensed against him; he was penniless, with no friends to whom he could turn for supplies; the country was against him, and he had no one to give him advice! He sent Paolo Orsini with a few horse and three hundred foot to reinforce the garrison of Sarzana; but no sooner had he done this than, assailed by fresh fears, he resolved to go to the royal camp and sue for peace. In this way he thought to imitate his father's journey to Naples, when, by daringly putting himself in King Ferdinand's power, Lorenzo had succeeded in obtaining honourable terms from him. But it is very difficult for history to reproduce itself, and Piero, urged by fear to that which Lorenzo had done from courage, reaped nothing but humiliation and ruin by an act that had brought increased power and prestige to his father.[1]

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[1] Parenti (in the holograph MS., from which we have already quoted, in the National Library, II., IV., 169, at sheet 187) writes that Piero said on this occasion: "Every one must act for himself." Commines, Guicciardini, Nardi, Cerretani, &c., are all perfectly agreed as to these facts. See also De Cherrier, vol. i. chap. i.; Cappelli, op. cit., p. 34 and fol.

On his departure he sent letters to Florence full of discouragement and confusion, in which he tried to explain his intentions. He felt that he was rushing to his ruin, *traho*[1] *ad immolandum;* he was forsaken by all, and this was his last resource. He should always remain faithful to the King of Naples.[2] Meanwhile, on the 2nd November, the Florentines despatched seven ambassadors to overtake Piero. They were to keep a strict watch on his actions, and endeavour to obtain easy terms, without giving too much offence to the king.[3] But Piero was already at Pietrasanta, and had there learnt that Orsini had been defeated on the march by a small body of French. This news having increased his anxiety to obtain peace at any price, he sent to demand a safe-conduct, and directly he received it, repaired to the camp. There he found that the king and his advanced guard had been attacking the fortress of Sarzanello for three days without success. Any other man would have known how to turn this failure and the perilous position of the enemy's forces to his own advantage; but Piero was unable to shake off his terrors, and was additionally cowed by the cold and haughty reception he met with from the king. Without even questioning the ambassadors, he had the incredible folly to cede all the three fortresses to Charles, despatching peremptory orders to their governors for their consignment to the French, who lost no time in taking possession of them. He also promised Charles 200,000 florins and permission to hold the fortresses of Pisa and and Leghorn so long as the war should last.

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[1] Instead of *trahor*, according to the original manuscript in the Florentine Archives. Piero meant to say: I go to immolate myself of my own accord.

[2] Desjardin, vol. i. p. 587 and fol. See also Guasti, "Relazioni diplomatiche tra la Toscana e la Francia," in the "Archivio, Stor. Ital.," N.S., vol. xvi. part ii. pp. 54 and 55.

[3] Desjardin, vol. i. p. 594 and fol.

Being now masters of the Tuscan territory the French made a rapid advance, scarcely able to believe in the change, by which they had been so miraculously delivered from danger. They all accepted it as a sign that Heaven favoured their enterprise; and this belief was not only shared by generals as well as soldiery, but even by the king, who was now convinced that he was really the new Cyrus, foretold by the preacher of St. Mark's.[1] When the news of these events reached Florence, it roused the public to indescribable fury, and led to startling and most important events.

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[1] Philippe de Comines, "Memoires," livre vii. cap. ix. p. 451. This writer says that the French could not believe their own eyes, and laughed at Piero de' Medici on seeing how readily he yielded everything: "Comme si tost accorda si grande chose." And he frequently repeats that: "Dieu monstroit conduire l'entreprise.

CHAPTER II.

THE MEDICI ARE EXPELLED FROM FLORENCE. SAVONAROLA IS SENT ON AN EMBASSY TO THE FRENCH CAMP.

(NOVEMBER, 1494.)

THE month of November, 1494, began under sinister auspices in Florence. The unexpected, almost incredible news of the surrender of fortresses which had cost the Republic prolonged sieges and enormous expense,[1] and formed the key of the whole Tuscan territory, instantly raised a tumult among the people; and the general fury was increased by letters received from the French camp, and the accounts of the returned envoys. For they told with what ease honourable terms might have been wrested from the king; with what a mixture of cowardice and self-assertion Piero de' Medici had placed the whole Republic at the mercy of Charles VIII., without waiting for the ambassadors or interrogating any one. All gave free vent to their indignation, and the people began to gather in the streets and squares. Some of the crowd were seen to be armed with old weapons which had been hidden away for more than half a century; others flourished daggers, which, as they said, had done work in the Duomo on the day of the Pazzi plot; and from the wool and silk manufactories strong, broad-set, dark-visaged men poured forth, reminding the beholder of Michele di Lando's Ciompi.[1] On that day it seemed as though the Florentines had leapt back a century, and that after patient endurance of sixty years' tyranny they were now decided to reconquer their liberty by violence and bloodshed.

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[1] The fortress of Pietrasanta cost the Republic 150,000 ducats and a two months' siege; that of Sarzana, 50,000 florins. *Vide* Rinuccini "Ricordi Storici," p. cxli. This diary was brought out by Aiazzi, in Florence, 1840, and may be consulted with profit. *Vide* also Cerretani, "Storia di Firenze," cod. cit. II., III., 74, at sheet 180.

Nevertheless, in the midst of this general excitement, men's minds were daunted by an equally general feeling of uncertainty and distrust. It was true that the Medici had left no soldiers in Florence, and that the people could at any moment make themselves masters of the whole city; but they knew not whom to trust, nor whom to choose as their leader. The old champions of liberty had nearly all perished during the last sixty years, either at the block or in persecution and exile. The few men at all familiar with State affairs were those who had always basked in the favour of the Medici,[2] and the multitude just freed from slavery would inevitably recur to licence if left to themselves. This, therefore, was one of those terrible moments when no one could foretell what excesses and what atrocities might not be committed. All day the people streamed aimlessly through the streets, like an impetuous torrent; they cast covetous glances on the houses of citizens who had amassed wealth by acts of oppression; but they had no one to lead them; only at the hour of Savonarola's sermon they all flocked instinctively to the Duomo. Never had so dense a throng been gathered within its walls; all were too closely packed to be able to move; and when at last Savonarola mounted the pulpit he looked down upon a solid and motionless mass of upturned faces. Unusual sternness and excitement were depicted on every countenance, and he could see steel corselets flashing here and there in the cloaked crowd.

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[1] Jacopo Nardi, Istoria di Firenze," vol. i. p. 37 and fol.

[2] "Florence, thou knowest that for sixty years thou hast had an armed man in thy home. . . . He robbed thee of thy goods and he robbed thee of thy women, and thou wast compelled to bear all with patience. . . . Where couldst thou find support? Under what government didst thou live, but a government made I know not how? Tell me what brains hadst thou on thy side? On his were better brains than on thine—I would say those of his adherents" (From a sermon preached by Savonarola on the third Sunday in Lent, 1496).

The Friar was now the only man having any influence over the people, who seemed to hang on his words and look for safety to him alone. One hasty word from his mouth would have sufficed to cause all the houses of the principal citizens to be sacked, to revive past scenes of civil warfare, and lead to torrents of blood. For the people had been cruelly trampled on, and were now panting for a cruel revenge. He therefore carefully abstained from all allusion to politics; his heart was overflowing with pity; he bent forward with outstretched arms from the pulpit, and in tones which echoed throughout the building, proclaimed the law of peace and charity and union: "Behold! the sword has come upon you, the prophecies are fulfilled, the scourges begun! Behold! these hosts are led by the Lord! O Florence! The time of singing and dancing is at an end; now is the time to shed floods of tears for thy sins. Thy sins, O Florence! thy sins, O Rome! thy sins, O Italy! They have brought these chastisements upon thee! Repent ye, then; give alms, offer up prayers, be united! O my people! I have long been as thy father; I have laboured all the days of my life to teach ye the truths of faith and of godly living, yet have I received nought but tribulation, scorn, and contumely; give me at least the consolation of seeing ye do good deeds! My people, what desire hath ever been mine but to see ye saved, to see ye united? 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!' But I have said this so many times, I have cried to ye so many times; I have wept for thee, O Florence, so many times, that it should be enough. . . . To Thee I turn, O Lord, to Thee, who didst die for love of us and for our sins: forgive, O Lord, forgive the Florentine people, that would fain be Thy people"[1] And in this strain he continued to exhort his hearers to charity, faith, and concord with such exceeding earnestness and fervour that he was exhausted and almost ill for several days after.[2] These sermons were less eloquent than some of the others, since he was too deeply moved for reflection or for studied effects; but the tenderness with which he spoke dominated and soothed the people, who, fresh from the tumults without, entered this place of peace to hear the words of the Gospel. So magical was the power of Savonarola's voice in those days, that, in all this great stir of public excitement, not a single excess was committed, and the revolution that seemed on the point of being effected by violence on the Piazza was quietly and peaceably accomplished within the walls of the palace. And this miracle, unprecedented in Florentine history, is unanimously attributed by the historians of the time to Savonarola's beneficial ascendency over the minds of the people.[3]

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[1] "Sermons on Haggai," delivered in Advent, 1494. Venice, 1544. Frate Stefano da Codiponte transcribed them as they were spoken. See the first sermon. Haggai was the prophet who addressed the Hebrews on their return from captivity in Babylon, in order to urge them to rebuild the temple. It is easy, therefore, to understand why Savonarola made choice of the subject at this moment.

[2] "Calendis igitur Novembris, id est Sanctorum omnium solemnitate, et duobus proximis diebus, voci et lateri non peperci, et (ut omni populo notum est) tantum ex pulpito declamavi, quod infirmior corpore factus, paene langui" ("Compendium Revelationum," p. 236).

[3] All the historians are unanimous in asserting that Savonarola was the soul of the Florentine people during those days. If much was owed to

On November 4th the Signory called a special meeting of the Council of Seventy, in order to decide what course to adopt. All the members were adherents and nominees of the Medici, but were so enraged by the cowardly surrender of the fortresses that they already had the air of a republican assembly. According to the old Florentine law and custom no one was allowed to speak unless invited to do so by the Signory, and was then only expected to support the measures which they had proposed. But in moments of public excitement neither this nor any other law was observed in Florence. On this day there was great agitation in the Council; the safety of the country was at stake; the Signory asked every one for advice, and all wished to speak. Yet so much were men's minds daunted by the long habit of slavery, that when Messer Luca Corsini broke through the old rule, and, rising to his feet, uninvited, began to remark that things were going badly, the city falling into a state of anarchy, and that some strong remedy was required, every one felt amazed. Some of his colleagues began to murmur, others to cough; and at last he began to falter and became so confused that he could not go on with his speech.[1]

However the debate was soon reopened by Jacopo di

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him for having roused them during the previous years from their prolonged slumber, a still greater debt was due to him for having maintained peace and concord in those days of disturbance. This will be more fully seen in the ensuing chapters, and the sermons on Haggai will supply us with excellent proofs. Guicciardini was one of those who best judged and appreciated Savonarola. In his dialogue, "Sul Reggimento di Firenze," p. 28, he makes Bernardo del Nero address the following words to Capponi, who sided with the government of the "Ottimati": "I hold you to be deeply indebted to this Friar, who, having early quieted the tumult, has prevented any trial being made of the results of this form of government of yours; for I cannot doubt that it would have given birth to civil discords of such a sort as would have speedily produced some disorderly and tumultuous change." As Savonarola was the only man who saved the State from anarchy, Guicciardini also writes of him at some length in his "Storia Fiorentina."

[1] Cerretani, "Storia di Firenze," Cod. cit., at sheet 181.

Tanai de' Nerli, a youth of considerable spirit, who warmly seconded Corsini's words; but he too presently began to hesitate, and his father, rising in great confusion, sought to excuse him in the eyes of the assembly by saying that he was young and foolish.

Lastly Piero di Gino Capponi rose to his feet. With his finely-proportioned form, white hair, fiery glance, and a certain air of buoyant courage like that of a warhorse at sound of trumpet, he attracted universal attention, and reduced all to silence. He was known to be a man of few but resolute words, and of still more resolute deeds. He now spoke plainly, and said: "Piero de' Medici is no longer fit to rule the State; the Republic must provide for itself; *the moment has come to shake off this baby government.*[1] Let ambassadors be sent to King Charles, and should they meet Piero by the way, let them pass him without salutation; and let them explain that he has caused all the evil, and that the city is well disposed to the French. Let honourable men be chosen to give a fitting welcome to the king; but, at the same time, let all the captains and soldiery be summoned in from the country, and hidden away in cloisters and other secret places. And besides the soldiery, let all men be prepared to fight in case of need, so that when we shall have done our best to act honestly towards this most Christian monarch, and to satisfy with money the avarice of the French, we may be ready to face him and show our teeth if he should try us beyond our patience, either by word or deed. And above all," he said in conclusion, "it must not be forgotten to send Father Girolamo Savonarola as one of the ambassadors, for he has gained the entire love of the people."[1] He might have added: because he has the entire respect of the king; for Charles had conceived an almost religious veneration for the man who had so long foretold his coming, and declared it to be ordained by the Lord.

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[1] Cerretani has bequeathed us a minute account of this debate (Cod. cit., at sheet 181 and fol.). It is also mentioned by Gaddi, the "Priorista," who, however, puts into Nerli's mouth the concluding words really spoken by Capponi, to whom, as a man of mature years, they are far more appropriate than to the very youthful Nerli. *Vide* Acciajoli, "Vita di Piero Capponi," in the "Archivio Storico," vol. iv. part ii. In the appendix to the biography a portion of the "Priorista Gaddi" is given.

The new ambassadors were elected on the 5th of November, and consisted of Pandolfo Rucellai, Giovanni Cavalcanti, Piero Capponi, Tanai de' Nerli, and Savonarola.[2] The latter allowed the others to precede him to Lucca, where they hoped to meet the king, while he followed on foot according to his usual custom, accompanied by two of his brethren.[3] But, before starting, he again addressed the people, and preached a sermon ending with these words: "The Lord hath granted thy prayers, and wrought a great revolution by peaceful means. He alone came to rescue the city when it was forsaken of all. Wait and thou shalt see the disasters which will happen elsewhere. Therefore be steadfast in good works, O people of Florence; be steadfast in peace! If thou wouldst have the Lord steadfast in mercy, be thou merciful towards thy brethren, thy friends, and thy enemies; otherwise thou too shalt be smitten by the scourges prepared for the rest of Italy. *Misericordiam volo*, crieth the Lord unto ye. Woe to him that obeyeth not His commands!"[4]

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[1] Cerretani and Acciaioli, from whom we have already quoted. Capponi had a great veneration for Savonarola and the brotherhood of St. Mark's, but did not show himself unfailingly constant. He used to confess to Frà Silvestro, and his published letters in the Archivio Storico, at the end of Acciaioli's biography of him, give frequent proofs of his high esteem for the Prior.

[2] *Vide* the portion of the "Priorista Gaddi," published in the Appendix of the Life of Capponi, to which we have before referred, and Desjardin, vol. i. p. 598 and fol.

[3] Parenti, "Storia," already quoted; Cod. already quoted, sheet 190.

[4] "Prediche sopra Aggeo," Sermon iii.

After delivering this discourse he started for Pisa, where the other ambassadors and also the king speedily arrived.

When Piero de' Medici found that these envoys came in the name of the Republic, without offering any sign of allegiance to himself, he at once understood that some important change had occurred in Florence. He therefore earnestly besought the king's assistance, and promised immediate payment of the required 200,000 ducats.[1] Then, after bidding Paolo Orsini to collect his troops, hire as many men as possible in the neighbourhood, and follow him to Florence, he hastily returned to the city on the evening of the 8th of November.[2] The ensuing day, towards the twenty-first hour, he presented himself at the palace with a numerous retinue, for the purpose of calling a general parliament of the people, and of taking the government into his own hands. But the Signory being forewarned of his designs, only allowed him to bring in a few of his companions, and, receiving him with studied coldness, advised him to dismiss his hired troops in order to avoid involving himself and the city in a fruitless struggle. Piero was so confounded by this cold and determined reception, that he knew not what course to adopt, and withdrew muttering that he would first see what was to be done and then return to announce his decision to the Signory. Repairing to his own house, he sent orders to Orsini to seize the San Gallo Gate; and after providing himself with weapons, and an armed escort, went again to the palace. But several members of the Government stood in the doorway and barred his entrance, telling him they were forbidden to let him pass that way, and could only admit him, alone and unarmed, by the little postern gate. Thereupon, boiling with rage, and with threatening glances, he turned away. But he had scarcely gone two steps, when he was hailed by one of the mace-bearers to the Signory, sent by Messer Antonio Lorini, the only member of the Government still remaining faithful to the Medici, on purpose to call him back. This Lorini, chancing to be Proposto[1] that day, had the sole right of proposing measures for discussion, and had thus been able to prevent the issue of any decree hostile to Piero. Also, having the care of the tower keys, he had prevented the bell from being rung to summon the people. But he had gone too far in venturing to recall Piero, in defiance to the general will; so now Messer Luca Corsini, together with Jacopo de' Nerli and Filippozzo Gualterotti, came to the gate expressly to prevent his admittance. Lorini's invitation had restored Piero's courage, so he now tried to take an arrogant tone and force his way in; but Nerli drove him back with words of insult, and shut the door in his face

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[1] Parenti, "Storia," already quoted; Cod., already quoted, at sheet 94. See also the "Priorista Gaddi," p. 41 and fol.

[2] Jacopo Nardi, vol. i. p. 42; Rinuccini, "Ricordi," p. clii.

On witnessing this scene the populace began to riot, and, by way of proving their contempt for Piero, drove him off with scornful cries and gestures, wagging the tips of their hoods at him, while the street boys assailed him with hisses and volleys of stones. Piero had drawn his sword, but, unable to decide whether to use it or sheathe it, shrank timidly away surrounded by his followers and cowed by the mere voice of the people, upon whom he had so arrogantly trampled. While he and his band were retreating with the mob at their heels, they encountered the Bargello,[2] Pico Antonio dell' Aquila, who, attempting to give aid to the Mediceans, was immediately seized by the unarmed crowd, and, together with his men, stripped of all weapons and valuables. He was then led to his palace (the Bargello) and compelled to release all the prisoners confined there. Thereupon the rioters hurried away, and it was a strange sight to see that the arms taken from the Bargello, were the first brandished in the cause of liberty. But already the great bell of the Signory was heard pealing the alarm, and the whole population rushed to the Piazza. All left their houses, closed their shops, and issued forth armed with billhooks, spits, stakes, or any other implement that came handy. On that day some old citizens were seen dressed in quaint-cut garments and with rusty weapons, recalling the times of the perished Republic, and their appearance was everywhere hailed with cries of joy by the crowd.[1]

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[1] The Proposto was generally changed twice a week and sometimes every second day.

[2] Captain of Justice.

Hardly was the throng gathered in the Piazza than Francesco Valori appeared mounted on a mule and covered with dust, having just returned from the camp whither he had been sent as one of the first embassy from Florence. The crowd pressed round him to ask for news, and in a moment he was in the thick of the riot. Valori was an old partisan of the Medici, had filled many posts under Lorenzo, and been one of the five citizens sent by that prince to urge Savonarola to alter the tone of his sermons. But that interview had excited Valori's sympathy for the Friar, and he had gradually become one of his most devoted followers. Disgusted by Piero's misrule, he was now an energetic member of the popular party, where he was more in his place than among the Mediceans. For he had all the qualities of a popular leader, being impetuous and daring, narrow-brained, large-hearted, rashly eager in all his resolves, and perfectly at home in popular tumults. So, now, without even dismounting from his mule, or shaking off the dust of the journey, he began to harangue the multitude. He told how at first the king had seemed well disposed towards the ambassadors, but that on following him to Pisa they had been very coldly received, thanks to Piero de' Medici, who, before leaving the camp, had accepted disgraceful terms, and made numerous promises and requests to the injury of Florence. And on seeing that his narrative had inflamed the popular fury, he put himself at the head of the mob and marched them with cries of *Abbasso le palle* (Down with the balls)[1] to attack the Medici Palace.[2]

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[1] Jacopo Nardi, vol. i. p. 41 and fol.; Rinuccini, "Ricordi Storici," p. clii. and fol.,; .Gaddi, "Priorista," p. 41 and fol.; Parenti, "Storia" (already quoted) sheet 192 and fol.; Cerretani, "Storia di Firenze," sheet 192 and fol.; Landucci, "Diario," p. 73 and fol.

Piero meanwhile had summoned Orsini and his troops, assumed his armour and determined to force his way into the public palace. His brother, Cardinal Giovanni,[3] set out first and rushed through the town trying to rally the people in his favour to the cry of *palle*, *palle !* But there was no response, and he was threatened on all sides, in the streets and from the windows. On reaching the Church of St. Bartolommeo, he descried the approach of the furious crowd led by Valori, and beat a rapid retreat, seeing that weapons were flashing and blows begun. Returning to the Medici house he found that Piero had already taken flight. For the latter, having received a decree from the Signory, proscribing himself and the Cardinal as rebels, and learned that his brother was being driven back, had not even the courage to wait for him, but had fled to the San Gallo Gate with his few remaining followers. There he made a desperate attempt to raise the inhabitants of that quarter—people of the lowest class, who had been always strongly attached to his House. But his words and the gold he scattered in the streets were equally fruitless. Even these dregs of the populace treated him with contempt and turned away towards the palace of the Signory. Then at last he saw that all hope was gone, and that the best he could do was to save his life. Humiliated and overwhelmed by these sudden reverses, he set forth on the road to Bologna, and before he had made a dozen steps beheld the city gates closed behind him. He was accompanied by a handful of soldiers, who, sharing his fears of being attacked on the way and cut to pieces by the peasantry, nearly all deserted him before he came to the Tuscan frontier. Reaching Bologna with his scanty and miserable escort, worn out and exhausted by his long journey, he met with a very rough reception from Bentivoglio, who said: "I would rather have been hacked to pieces than abandon my State in this fashion." Yet before long, in the presence of a similar danger, the haughty Bentivoglio was himself reduced to cowardly flight. Meanwhile Piero, increasingly depressed by his adverse fate, pursued his journey to Venice, where he at last found courtesy and rest. But while there, he was pained to find that Soderini, the Florentine ambassador, had already declared in favour of the new government. The Venetians, however, received him with all the honours they usually accorded to fallen potentates, and this was balm to his troubled spirit.

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[1] Six balls were the Medici arms.—TR.
[2] See the authors quoted above.
[3] Afterwards Pope Leo X.

His experiences during the last few days seemed to have lasted a century. He now awoke as from a weary dream, and began to realize the enormous folly of his conduct, and his cowardice in leaving the State, when threatened by no positive danger, and when the French king seemed ready to assist him. It is certain that, had he shown a determined spirit during those days, he might have succeeded in putting down the budding revolt and relied on the speedy assistance of the French.[1] In fact the king was so favourably disposed towards him, that he sent messengers to Venice to invite his return. But Piero shrank from the thought of again exposing himself to the tumultuous throng whose cries still rang menacingly in his ears. Meanwhile the Cardinal, who had shown greater courage during his flight, also arrived in Venice.[1] The latter had remained in Florence for some time, disguised as a monk and exposed to much hardship and danger; he had collected all the more precious valuables which he was able to find in the hurry and confusion, and ensured their safety by conveying them to the convent of St. Mark. His example was followed by several other citizens who were conscious of having incurred the hatred of the people. The integrity of Savonarola and his brotherhood was held in such great esteem, that, although their convent was practically the headquarters of the popular party, the partisans of the Medici, and even the Cardinal himself, knew of no safer place for the bestowal of their treasures.

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[1] This was the opinion not only of Nardi and the other historians, but also of Savonarola, who consequently attributed the expulsion of the

About this period the Signory proclaimed a reward of 2000 florins for the dead bodies of Piero and the Cardinal, of 5000 for their delivery alive.[2] At the same time

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Medici to the Divine intervention. "God hath freed you of this strong man of war; let no one say to thee: It was I that overcame him, for thou hadst not the strength to uproot so great a House and so powerful a man. . . . God hath been stronger than he; He hath taken his spoils from him and his own possessions and his dominion over thee" (Sermon delivered the third Sunday in Lent, 1496).

[1] Guasti, "Della relazioni diplomatiche tra la Toscana e la Francia," in the "Archivio Storico Italiano," N.S. vol. xiv. part ii. p. 57. On November 9th the Signory announced to their ambassadors that Piero and Cardinal Giovanni had been expelled by the people and had fled towards Bologna.

[2] So says Giovanni Cambi, "Storia," vol. ii. p. 78. Landucci (p. 75) only says that they put the price of 2000 florins on Piero's head, and of 1000 on the Cardinal's; others give different versions. But we learn from the official documents ("Deliberazioni della Signoria, ad annum," sheets 95 and 95^t) that on November 20th a reward of 2000 *lire* was offered for Piero's head, without any mention of the Cardinal's. It is difficult to

efforts were made to destroy all memory of the past despotism. The effigies of the rebels of 1434 painted on the walls of the Podestà's palace were effaced, and likewise those of the rebels of '78 by Andrea del Castagno on the door of the Custom House.[1]

The Neroni and Pazzi families were recalled, together with many others. who had been exiled or relegated to certain places. Among these were Piero's cousins, Lorenzo and Giovanni de' Medici, who, immediately after their return, stripped the shield with the *palle* from their houses, put the arms of the Florentine people in its place, and changed their name from Medici to Popolani. Thus the hitherto despised multitude was now beset with flattery!

Meanwhile disturbances went on increasing, and the populace seemed already intoxicated with licence. The dwellings of Giovanni Guidi, notary and chancellor of the Riformagioni, and of Antonio Miniati, manager of the Monte,[2] were put to the sack, for both these men having been faithful tools of the Medici, and their subtle counsellors in the art of burdening the people with insupportable taxes, were objects of general hatred.[3] The house of Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici was also pillaged, together with the garden by St. Mark's, in which so many treasures of art had been collected by Lorenzo. So far, with the exception of a few dagger thrusts, no blood had been shed; but many were eager for conflict, and it would have certainly begun, had not Savonarola's partisans done their

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ascertain how matters really stood in that period of confusion. Many decrees were passed, which remained unregistered, and were afterwards changed, for different reasons. And rumours were purposely spread of decrees which had never been passed. It is extremely probable that the Government did not dare to register its proceedings against the Cardinal, on account of their respect for his ecclesiastical dignity.

[1] So says Nardi. But, according to Vasari, the effigies of the rebels of '78 had also been painted on the Podestà's palace. Cosimo returned from exile in 1434; the conspiracy of the Pazzi took place in 1478.

[2] State Bank.

[3] Nardi, vol. i. p. 46.

best to keep the peace, and had not the Friar been hourly expected from Pisa, whither he had repaired on the 13th day of the month with a second embassy.[1] The Signory also endeavoured to quell the disturbances by means of edicts of the severest kind.

But the popular discontent was now heightened by the arrival of other envoys from Pisa with very unsatisfactory tidings. They had informed the king that Florence was friendly to him, and already preparing to welcome him with all the honours due to his royalty; they only asked that, being received as a friend, he should bear himself in that light, and deign to name his terms at once, so that free vent might be given to the public joy. But the only reply Charles condescended to give was that "Once in the great town, all should be arranged."[2] And it was evident from his Majesty's coldness that the solicitations of Piero de' Medici, his earnest prayers, lavish promises of money, and submissive obedience, had turned him in his favour. Consequently the ambassadors had to leave without any definite answer, and could only say that the monarch was by no means well disposed to the Republic.

But when the foiled envoys had left Pisa, Savonarola repaired to the French camp, and passing through that great host of armed men, made his way to the king's presence. Charles, who was surrounded by his generals, received him very kindly, and thereupon, without wasting much time in preliminaries, the Friar, in sonorous and almost commanding accents, addressed him with a short exhortation beginning as follows: "O most Christian king, thou art an instrument in the hand of the Lord, who sendeth thee to relieve the woes of Italy, as for many years I have foretold; and He sendeth thee to reform the Church which now lieth prostrate in the dust. But if thou be not just and merciful; if thou shouldst fail to respect the city of Florence, its women, its citizens, and its liberty; if thou shouldst forget the task the Lord hath sent thee to perform, then will He choose another to fulfil it; His hand shall smite thee, and chastise thee with terrible scourges. These things say I unto thee in the name of the Lord."[1] The king and his generals seemed much impressed by Savonarola's menacing words, and to have full belief in them. In fact it was the general feeling of the French that they were divinely guided to fulfil the Lord's work, and Charles felt a strong veneration for the man who had prophesied his coming and foretold the success of his expedition. Consequently the Friar's exhortation inspired him with real terror, and decided him to behave more honourably to the Florentines. Thus, when Savonarola returned to the city shortly after the other ambassadors, he was the bearer of more satisfactory intelligence.

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[1] During these days successive embassies were sent to the king. That of the 13th comprised Savonarola, Benedetto Nerli, Lorenzo Lenzi, Piero Vittori, and Bernardo Rucellai. On the 15th of the same month two others were despatched and a third appointed. See Guasti, op. cit., p. 58.

[2] "Dentro alla gran *villa* s'assetterebbe ogni cosa."

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[1] This discourse is to be found at p. 237 and fol. of the "Compendium Revelationum." For the compilation of our narrative of these events (besides using the documents given to the world by Desjardin and Guasti, we have relied not only on Nardi's minute account, but also on the evidence of Cerretani, Parenti, Rinuccini, Gaddi, Landucci, and Guicciardini, &c. All these writers agree as to the main facts, while differing as to minute and insignificant details.

CHAPTER III.

THE REVOLT OF PISA. THE ENTRY OF CHARLES VIII. INTO FLORENCE; HIS TREATY WITH THE REPUBLIC, AND HIS DEPARTURE.

(November, 1494.)

OWING to fresh disasters, Tuscan affairs were now at a sad pass. On the very day that the Medici were expelled from Florence, the Pisans rose in revolt and regained their liberty by force. Ever since their subjection to the Florentine, or, as they called it, the foreign yoke, their sole aim had been to cast it off. Loss of independence had been almost immediately followed by the ruin of their commerce and industry. They had seen their population thinned, every free institution destroyed, and accordingly the greater part of the citizens had preferred exile to slavery. But, at the approach of the French, their hopes had revived, and Ludovico the Moor, who always fished in troubled waters, and already cherished the design of becoming master of Pisa, continually urged them to revolt, promising all kinds of assistance and causing secret hopes to be held out to them by persons in attendance upon the king. Hence, the moment Charles VIII. entered the city, the populace rose, tore down the Florentine arms, cast into the Arno the Marzocco[1] that stood on the bridge, and set up the king's statue in its place. The Florentine authorities were forcibly expelled and their houses sacked by the mob. Liberty and independence were instantly proclaimed, all exiles recalled, and preparations begun for the celebrated and ill-omened Pisan war, that was fated to exhaust the strength of both the revived republics, and cost the lives of many gallant citizens without any profit to either side.

The king was a spectator of these revolutionary acts, and at first seemed inclined to encourage them ; but his mood changed on beholding the expulsion of the Florentine rectors. He apparently expected the Pisans to reclaim their liberty without ceasing to yield obedience to the Florentines ! But the people, having once begun the revolt, proceeded to accomplish it with the utmost rapidity. Thereupon Charles placed a French garrison in the fortress, and, thinking that this was all that was required, resumed his journey, scarcely noticing what had happened, and without troubling himself as to the consequences of having encouraged the Pisans. Thus, even before entering Florence, he had dealt a cruel blow to the Republic by allowing its subjects to rise in rebellion before his eyes and with the French army within their walls. It was truly a dangerous example for the whole State, and one that was soon followed by Arezzo, Montepulciano, and other cities. Meanwhile he continued his march, with a few days' halt at Signa, in order to give time for the tumults in Florence to subside, and for suitable preparations to be made for his entry. Another embassy was sent to implore him to settle the terms of the treaty before he proceeded farther ; but he replied as before: "We will arrange everything within the great town (ville)."[1]

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[1] The Florentine Marzocco is the figure of a lion seated on its haunches, with one paw resting on a shield bearing the emblematic lily of the Republic. It was always erected in public places. The derivation of the word is unknown.—TR.

All this combined to keep the city in a state of confusion and suspense. The Medici only just driven out, the old government overthrown, and the new still unorganized; the king about to arrive without having been brought to terms, and at the head of a powerful army, already stained with Italian blood! There was excellent cause for alarm; but fortunately citizens of noted prudence and determination came to the Signory's aid. Among others there was Piero Capponi, who in these days seemed to be the right hand of the Republic, even as Savonarola was its heart and soul. The latter preached charity, peace, and union, while the former flew wherever his presence seemed needed, providing arms and collecting men. All the houses were stocked with war material of every kind; stakes and planks were prepared for barricading the streets; hired troops, amounting, it is said, to the number of six thousand, were quartered in courtyards and in cloisters, ready to sally forth in defence of the Republic at the first sound of the alarm bell.[2]

As the king's intentions were still unknown, fresh relays of ambassadors were sent out to him. But meanwhile French officers and men passed the gates in little bands of fifteen or so at a time, and were seen roving about the town unarmed, jaunty, and gallant, bearing pieces of chalk in their hands to mark the houses on which their troops were to be billeted. While affecting an air of contemptuous indifference, they were unable to hide their amazement at the sight of so many splendid buildings, and at every turn were confounded by the novel scenes presented to their gaze. But what struck them most of all was the grim severity of the palaces which appeared to be impregnable strongholds, and the towers still scarred with the marks of fierce and sanguinary faction fights. Then, on the 15th of November, they witnessed a sight that sent a thrill of fear to their souls. Whether by accident or design, a rumour suddenly spread through the town that Piero de' Medici was nearing the gates. Instantly the bell of the Signory clanged the alarm; the streets swarmed with a furious mob; armed men sprang, as by magic, from the earth, and rushed towards the Piazza; palace doors were barred; towers bristled with defenders; stockades began to be built across the streets, and on that day the French took their first lesson in the art of barricades. It was soon ascertained that the rumour was false, and the tumult subsided as quickly as it had risen. But the foreign soldiers were forced to acknowledge that their tactics and their stout battalions would be almost powerless, hemmed in those streets, against this new and unknown mode of warfare. In fact the Florentines looked on the Frenchmen with a certain pert assurance, as if they would say: "*We shall see!*" For having now regained its liberty, this people thought itself master of the world, and almost believed that there was nothing left for it to fear.[1]

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[1] Nardi, vol. i., p. 47. See also the other historians before quoted, and more especially Cerretani, Parenti, Gaddi, and Guicciardini.

[2] Guicciardini, "Storia d'Italia," i. 117, and "Storia Fiorentina," chaps. xi. and xii. See also Nardi and the other authors before quoted.

Meanwhile splendid preparations were being made in the Medici palace[2] for the reception of King Charles; his officers were to be lodged in the houses of the principal citizens, and the streets through which he was to pass were covered with awnings and draped with hangings and tapestries. On the 17th of November the Signory assembled on a platform erected by the San Frediano Gate; and numbers of young Florentine nobles went forth to meet the king, who made his state entry at the

[1] Nardi, Parenti, Cerretani, Rinuccini, &c.

[2] Now known as the Riccardi Palace in Via Cavour.

twenty-first hour of the day.[1] The members of the Signory then rose and advanced towards him to pay their respects, while Messer Luca Corsini, being deputed to that office, stood forth to read a written address. But just at that moment rain began to fall, the horses grew restless and hustled against one another, and the whole ceremony was thrown into confusion. Only Messer Francesco Gaddi, one of the officers of the palace, had sufficient presence of mind to press his way through the throng and make a short speech suited to the occasion in French; after which the king moved forward under a rich canopy.[2] The monarch's appearance was in strange contrast with that of the numerous and powerful army behind him. He seemed almost a monster, with his enormous head, long nose, wide, gaping mouth, big, white, purblind eyes, very diminutive body, extraordinarily thin legs, and misshapen feet. He was clad in black velvet, and a mantle of gold brocade; bestrode a tall and very beautiful charger, and entered the city riding with his lance levelled—a martial attitude then considered as a sign of conquest. All this rendered the meanness of his person the more grotesquely conspicuous. By his side rode the haughty Cardinal of St. Piero in Vincoli, the Cardinal of St. Malò, and a few marshals. At their heels came the royal body-guard of 100 bowmen, composed of the finest young men in France, and then 200 French knights marching on foot with splendid dresses and equipments. These were followed by the Swiss vanguard, resplendent and parti-coloured, bearing halberds of burnished steel, and with rich waving plumes on their officers' helmets. The faces of these men expressed the mountaineer spirit of daring and the proud consciousness of being the first infantry in Europe;

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[1] *I.e.*, about two o'clock in the afternoon.

[2] Gaddi, "Priorista," in the "Archivio Storico Italiano," vol. iv. part ii. p. 42.

while the greater part of them had scornfully thrown aside the cuirass, preferring to fight with their chests bared. The centre consisted of Gascon infantry, small, light, agile men, whose numbers seemed to multiply as the army advanced. But the grandest sight was the cavalry, comprising the flower of the French aristocracy, and displaying finely-wrought weapons, mantles of gorgeous brocade, velvet banners embroidered with gold, chains of gold, and other precious ornaments. The cuirassiers had a terrible aspect, for their horses seemed like monsters with their cropped tails and ears. The archers were men of extraordinary height, armed with very long wooden bows; they came from Scotland and other northern countries, and—in the words of a contemporary historian—*seemed to be beast-like men* (*parevano nomini bestiali*).[1]

This well-ordered and disciplined army, composed of so many different nationalities, with such varied attire and strange weapons, was as new and amazing a sight to Florence as to almost all Italy, where no standing armies were as yet in existence, and mercenaries the only soldiery known. It is impossible to give the number of the forces accompanying the king to Florence; for his artillery were marching towards Rome by another route, he had left garrisons in many strongholds, and sent on another body of men by Romagna. Gaddi,[2] who witnessed the entrance of the French, says that their numbers amounted to

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[1] Cerretani, "Storia di Firenze," at sheet 201, Parenti; Gaddi, Nardi. See also Albèri, "Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti," vol iv. p. 16. In the midst of the terror spread by this army it was the theme of many satirical remarks, especially from the Venetians, whose pride was always the greatest. Marin Sanudo tells us—in his "Spedizione" di Carlo VIII. in Italia," p. 134—that the French weapons seemed "better suited for splitting doors than for fighting." And, at the head of all the soldiers, he adds, there marched "a monster of a man (*omaccione*) with a polished sword like a spit for roast pork, and then four big drums played with both hands, and accompanied by two pipes, making an infernal noise, such as one hears at a fair."

[2] Gaddi, "Priorista."

12,000; Rinuccini, who was also present, estimated them at a lower figure; others at a higher. In any case the city and suburbs were crammed with them.

The procession marched over the Ponte Vecchio (Old Bridge), which was gay with festive decorations, and sounds of music, wound across the Piazza amid a crowd of triumphal cars, statues, &c., and, passing the Canto dei Pazzi, made the tour of the Cathedral Square, and halted before the great door of the church.[1] The people shouted the name of France with cries of applause, but the king only smiled inanely and stammered some inappropriate words in Italian. Entering the Duomo, he was met by the Signory, who, to avoid the pressure of the armed host, had been obliged to come round by the back streets. After joining in prayers with their royal guest, they escorted him to the sumptuous palace of the Medici, and the soldiers dispersed to their quarters. That night and the next the whole city was a blaze of illuminations; the intervening day was devoted to feasting and amusements, and then the terms of the treaty began to be discussed.

The arbiters or syndics chosen by the Signory for this purpose were: Messer Guidantonio Vespucci, Messer Domenico Bonsi, Francesco Valori, and Piero Capponi—all citizens of the highest reputation. Vespucci was thoroughly versed in law and the management of State affairs; Bonsi had won honourable distinction in many embassies; Valori, afterwards entitled the *Florentine Cato*, had become, as we have seen, one of the leaders of the people; and Capponi, to whom we have so frequently referred, was in truth a man of extraordinary gifts. He was born in 1447, of an old Florentine stock that had always been friendly to freedom and distinguished for many noble deeds. His father had trained him to commerce, recommending him to keep out of politics, now that the times were going badly, and accordingly Piero devoted himself so energetically to trade, that many accused him of being over greedy of gain. When about thirty years of age, Lorenzo de' Medici, who knew how to turn capable citizens to account, offered him several missions, which he willingly undertook and accomplished with admirable skill. On these occasions Capponi showed himself possessed of a singular insight into character, and a special power of gaining influence over the potentates with whom he had to deal, and more especially over those who prided themselves on their reticence and impenetrability. In fact Ferdinand and Alphonso of Naples frequently trusted to his advice rather than to that of their own generals and ministers. Capponi had done well in exchanging commerce for diplomacy, but he did still better in forsaking the latter for the business of war, and then realized that his true mission was neither to sit in a banking office, nor negotiate treaties, but rather to fight, sword in hand. His vocation was revealed to him by chance. He was acting as Commissary of the Republic to Alphonso of Aragon's camp when this monarch was marching to the assistance of the Duke of Ferrara. The Neapolitan army being defeated by the Papal forces, Alphonso was so deeply discomfited that he would have certainly ordered a retreat had not Capponi contrived to infuse fresh courage both in him and his men. And adding deeds to his words, the Florentine led the men into action in so gallant a way as to prove to himself that he was a good soldier, and not only capable of facing the enemy, but of making an excellent leader to all brave enough to follow him.[1] From that day he was always to be seen in the thickest of the fight, and the Republic, delighted to possess so valiant a captain, continually charged him with the most difficult enterprises. And the harder the task, the more readily Capponi assumed it, always acting both as soldier and commander — a fatal readiness that afterwards led to his death.

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[1] This narrative is mainly derived from the accounts of Gaddi and Rinuccini, who were spectators of the king's entrance. Cerretani supplies a very minute description of the French army; and Nardi, Parenti. Guicciardini, Sanudo, and Commines all give many particulars of it. Among modern writers we may mention Sismondi, "Hist. des Répub. Ital." and "Histoire des Français"; and Michelet, "Renaissance." De Cherrier's work is more recent, but contains little fresh information.

He had always been one of the most powerful men in Florence, and, from love of activity, had frequently given his services to Lorenzo the Magnificent. But when that prince was dead, and Piero reigning in his place, Capponi, as we have seen, soon lost patience with the latter's feeble, vacillating, and undignified rule, and, declaring himself an irreconcilable foe to the Medici, was one of those who did most to drive them from Florence. He was accordingly held in the highest estimation by the people, and the safety of the whole Republic was now entrusted, almost exclusively, to him. No better man could have been found to deal with Charles, and, if necessary, firmly resist him. Having been sent on several missions to France, he had learnt to understand the national character, and was accustomed to say: "When our Italians have once smelt the French, they will cease to have so great a fear of them."[2] Hence the whole weight of these grave and difficult negotiations naturally fell upon his shoulders, and the knowledge that the fate of the entire nation was in his hands, only swelled his courage and raised him, as it were, above himself.

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[1] This circumstance, while doing much honour to Capponi, is an additional proof of the miserable state to which the art of war in Italy had then been reduced. Acciaioli, "Vita di Piero Capponi," in the "Archivio Storico Italiano," vol. iv. part ii.

[2] *Vide* Capponi's Letters given in the appendix to the "Vita di Capponi," quoted above, p. 55. See also the fine remarks of Marquis Gino Capponi on the same subject in the first volume of the "Archivio Storico Italiano," p. 348 and fol.

Meanwhile the mother and wife of Piero de' Medici had gained the ear of the king and his advisers, and, in the words of the chronicler, "gave, and promised, and offered that if Piero could succeed in returning, he would share the government with the French."[1] These solicitations inclined the monarch still more in favour of the Medici, and the syndics of the Republic were now treated with great haughtiness. Charles gave them audience surrounded by his generals, advanced new and more exorbitant demands, and declared, among other things, that he had come to the city as a conqueror, having entered with levelled lance! These speeches only served to exasperate the people against him, without leading to any conclusion, and matters dragged on from bad to worse. When at last the king ventured to say a few words in Piero's favour to the syndics, the faces of the Republicans grew very stern, and there was a speedy change in the aspect of the city. The Signory instantly met in council at the palace, summoned the principal citizens, and informing them of the public danger, bade them make ready to fly to arms, and head the people at the first peal of the tower bell. Rumours of the expected crisis were already afloat; consequently Florentines and French began to exchange defiant glances and insulting words, and even occasionally came to blows.

One day a quarrel of this kind led to a serious disturbance. A band of French soldiers were seen going about the city dragging some Italian prisoners of war bound with ropes, whom they had taken in Lunigiana, forcing them to beg money in the streets to pay their ransom, and threatening to kill them if they did not obtain enough. The Florentines were so enraged by this barbarous sight, that some of the more daring spirits cut the cords and allowed the prisoners to escape. The French were furious, and vainly tried to recapture their victims. A fight ensued, the citizens stood their ground, and recruits poured in from all sides to swell the fray. The Swiss, hearing of the riot, thought that the king's safety was threatened, and made a rush towards his palace; but their passage was barred in Borgo Ognisanti, and on trying to force their way through, they were assailed by such a hailstorm of stones from the windows that they were driven to retreat. The struggle went on for an hour, but then some of the royal officers and many of the principal citizens came to quell the disturbance by the Signory's command. However, this was a severe lesson for the French; their pride was lowered, and they realized that Florence was not to be conquered by entering it *chalk in hand and lance to hip*.[1] A city, that at the first stroke of the alarm bell, could be converted into a menacing stronghold, that barricaded its streets, and rained down stones, fire and all sorts of projectiles from its windows, was a place of mystery and terror even for the haughty Swiss infantry, who were dismayed by seeing how easily an army could be destroyed in those narrow streets.[2]

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[1] Parenti, "Storia," MS., at sheet 203.

Thereupon the Signory took advantage of the opportunity, and, with the aid of many of the foreign ambassadors, at last succeeded in bringing the king to a more reasonable frame of mind. Some of his extravagant pretensions were abated; he said nothing more of Piero or the *conquered city*, and almost all the terms of the treaty were fixed.

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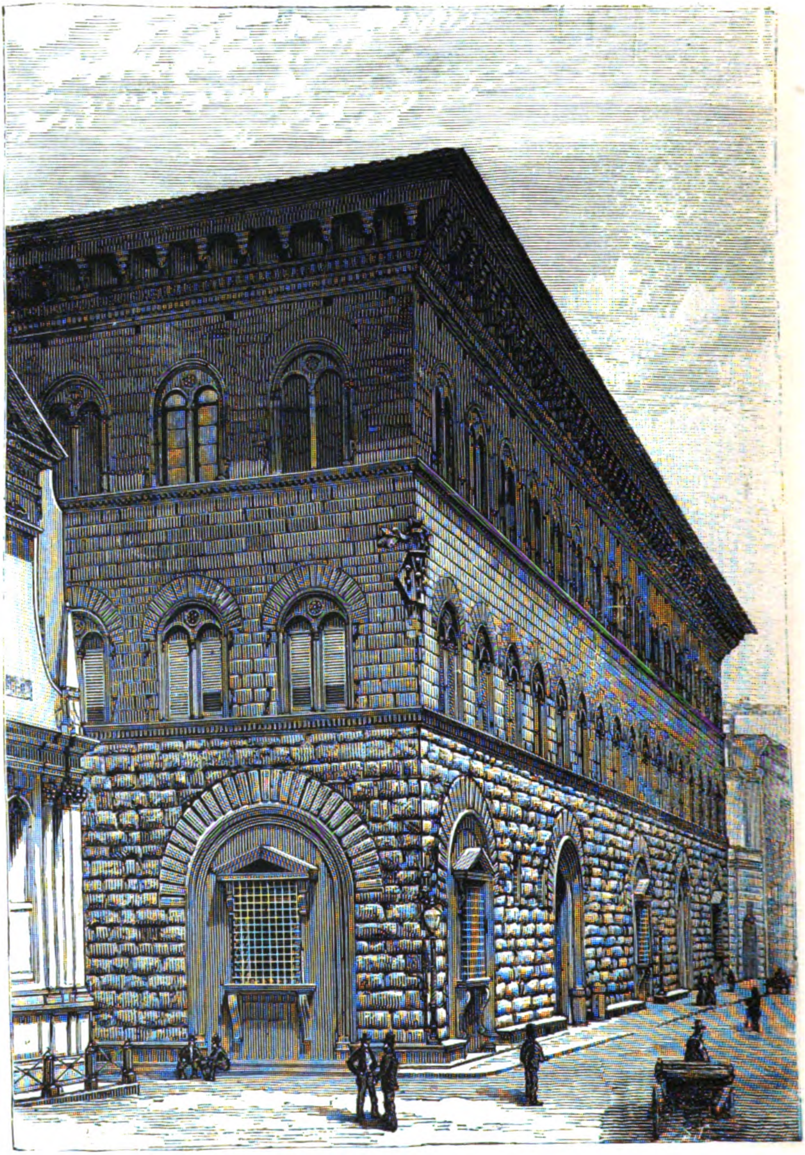
[1] It was in these terms that the king and his officers boasted that they were masters of Florence. As we have seen, the French made chalk marks on the houses they intended to occupy.

[2] *Vide* the descriptions of this riot given by Cerretani and Parenti. Cerretani (MS., loc. cit., sheet 211) concludes his narrative of the event in the following words: "A most courageous defence was made, the which inspired no little fear in the French; for the greater part of them, armed soldiers though they were, gathered together trembling like women."



THE MEDICI PALACE—NOW PALAZZO RICCARDI—WHERE THE TREATY WITH FLORENCE WAS SIGNED.

The king was to receive the title of Protector of the liberty of Florence, and have the right to hold the fortresses for two years, on condition that he restored them sooner, should the war be ended before that date. The Florentines also agreed to pay him a large sum of money; but fresh dissensions then arose as to its amount. Charles VIII. having been much impressed by the lavish promises of Piero de' Medici and his kindred, demanded a far larger sum than the Republic was able to pay, without most unjustly burdening all the citizens. Thus there was again much exasperation on either side, and messengers were continually sent backwards and forwards between the Signory and the king, without anything being settled. Charles clung obstinately to his demands, and Capponi found it very difficult to control his temper and restrain his indignation. At last the monarch ordered his secretary to read his *ultimatum*, saying that he would yield no more upon any point. Naturally the syndics again refused to accept it; whereupon the king turned on them in great fury and exclaimed, in a threatening tone: "Then we will sound our trumpets." At this Capponi became red as fire, and, snatching the paper from the secretary's hand, tore it in the king's face, and made his celebrated reply: "And we will ring our bells."[1] And thanks to the energy of his tone, the agreement was signed and sealed in a few hours, after so much entreaty and so many days of negotiation had been devoted to it in vain.[2]

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[1] The historian, Marquis Gino Capponi, says, in reference to Capponi's reply: "Fortune enabled him to seize one of the rare moments which only come once in a lifetime ("Archivio Storico Italiano," vol. i. p. 361.) *Vide* Cerretani, Parenti, Guicciardini, Nardi, Machiavelli; and the before quoted "Vita di P. Capponi."

[2] Machiavelli's "Decennali" contains some well-known lines on this theme:—

Lo strepito dell' armi e de' cavalli
Non potè far che non fosse sentita
La voce d'un Cappon fra cento Galli.

(Even the clash of arms and stamping of steeds could not drown the crow of a Capon among a hundred cocks.)

The terms of the treaty stood as follows :—That there should be a good and faithful friendship between the Republic and the king ; that their subjects should have reciprocal protection ; that the king should receive the title of Restorer and Protector of the liberty of Florence ; that he should be paid 120,000 florins in three instalments ; that he was not to retain the fortresses for more than two years ; and if the Neapolitan expedition finished before that date, he was then to give them up without delay ; that the Pisans were to receive pardon as soon as they should resume their allegiance to Florence. It was also stipulated that the decree, putting a price on the heads of the Medici, should be revoked, but that the estates of Giuliano and Cardinal Giovanni were to remain confiscated until all Piero's debts had been paid, and that the said Piero was to remain banished to a distance of 200 miles, and his brothers, of 100 from the Tuscan border. After the agreement had been drawn up in regular official form, the contracting parties met in the Duomo to swear to the observance of all its clauses, and in the evening there was a general illumination of the city, although the people gave no signs of their previous goodwill towards the King.[1]

But no sooner was one difficulty disposed of, than another arose. When all was concluded Charles relapsed into his normal state of inertia, and showed no disposition to depart. The city was thronged by the French quartered in the houses, and the Italian soldiery hidden on all sides ; the shops were shut up and all traffic suspended ; everything was in a state of uncertainty and disorder, and the continual quarrels between the natives and the foreigner might at any moment provoke the most serious complications. There were perpetual robberies and murders by night—a most unusual state of things for Florence; and the people seemed to be on the verge of revolt at the least provocation. Thus matters went on from day to day, and consequently all honest citizens vainly did their utmost to hasten the king's departure. And the universal suspense was heightened by the impossibility of finding any way of forcing him to a decision.

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[1] The treaty between Charles VIII. and the Republic was published in the first volume of the "Arch. Stor. Ital.," with some interesting remarks by Marquis Gino Capponi.

At last another appeal was made to Savonarola, who was exerting all his influence to keep the people quiet, and whose peaceful admonitions during this period of danger and confusion had been no less efficacious than the heroic defiance of Piero Capponi. The Friar's sermons at this time were always directed to the general welfare. He exhorted the citizens "to lay aside their animosities and ambitions; to attend the councils at the palace in a righteous spirit, and with a view, not to their personal interest, but to the general good, and with the firm resolve to promote the unity and concord of their city. Then, indeed, would they be acceptable in the Lord's sight."[1] He addressed himself to every class of the people in turn, proving to all that it would be to their own advantage, both in this life and the next, to labour for the defence of liberty and the establishment of union and concord. When asked to seek the king and endeavour to persuade him to leave, he cheerfully undertook the task and hastened to the royal abode. The officers and lords in attendance were at first inclined to refuse him admittance, fearing that his visit might defeat their plan of pillaging the treasures of this sumptuous palace. But remembering the veneration in which the Friar was held by the king, they dared not refuse his demand and allowed him to pass. Charles, surrounded by his Barons, received him very graciously, and Savonarola went straight to the point by saying:—"Most Christian Prince, thy stay here is causing great injury both to our city and thine own enterprise. Thou losest time, forgetful of the duty imposed on thee by Providence, and to the serious hurt of thy spiritual welfare and worldly fame. Hearken now to the voice of God's servant! Pursue thy journey without delay. Seek not to bring ruin on this city and thereby rouse the anger of the Lord against thee." [1]

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[1] "Prediche sopra Aggeo," before quoted. Venice, 1544. But, as in most of the Venetian editions of Savonarola's works, there are many blunders in this collection of sermons. For instance, sermon iv. is said to have been delivered after the expulsion of the Medici, and sermon v. after the Friar's return from Pisa. This has led several biographers to believe that Savonarola's journey from Florence to Pisa was made after the Medici had been driven out. But by careful perusal and by noticing that sermons i., ii., and iii. were preached on the 1st, 2nd, and 6th November, it will be ascertained that No. iv. is the sermon preached after Savonarola's return from Pisa, and that he was not in Florence when the Medici were expelled. This too is clearly proved by the chroniclers who give us the dates of the election of the ambassadors and of the day of their departure. And there are official documents to prove the accuracy of these dates.

So, at last, on the 28th November, at the twenty-second hour of the day, the king departed with his army, leaving the people of Florence very badly disposed towards him. Among their many just causes of complaint was the sack of the splendid palace in which he had been so liberally and trustfully entertained. Nor were common soldiers and inferior officers alone concerned in this robbery; the hands of generals and barons were equally busy, and the king himself carried off objects of the greatest value: among other things a precious *intaglio* representing a unicorn, estimated by Commines to be worth about seven thousand ducats. With such an example set them by their sovereign, it may be easily imagined how the others behaved; and Commines himself tells us that "they shamelessly took possession of everything that tempted their greed."[1] Thus the rich and marvellous collections formed by the Medici were all lost, excepting what had been placed in safety at St. Mark's, for the few things left behind by the French were so much damaged that they had to be sold.[2] Nevertheless the inhabitants were so rejoiced to be finally rid of their dangerous guests, that no one mourned over these thefts. On the contrary, public thanksgivings were offered up in the churches, the people went about the streets with their old gaiety and lightheartedness, and the authorities began to take measures to provide for the urgent necessities of the new Republic.

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[1] These facts have been repeatedly narrated by Savonarola himself, as well as by his biographers. *Vide* sermon xxvi., *sopra Michea* (on Micah), delivered the 28th October, 1496.

During this interval the aspect of Florentine affairs had entirely changed. The partisans of the Medici had disappeared from the city as if by magic; the popular party ruled over everything, and Savonarola ruled the will of the whole population. He was unanimously declared to have been a true prophet of all that had occurred, the only man who had succeeded in controlling the king's conduct on his entry into Florence, the only man who had induced him to depart: accordingly all hung on Savonarola's lips for counsel, aid, and direction as to their future proceedings. And as though the men of the old State saw the need of effacing themselves to make way for new blood, several prominent representatives and friends of the Medici House died during this period. Angelo Poliziano had passed away this year, on the 24th September, "loaded with as much infamy and public opprobrium as a man could well bear."[3] He was accused of numberless vices and unlimited profligacy; but the chief cause of all the hatred lavished on him was the general detestation already felt for Piero de' Medici, the approach of his downfall and that of all his adherents.[1] Nor was the public rancour at all softened by the knowledge that the last utterances of the illustrious poet and learned scholar had been the words of a penitent Christian. He had requested that his body should be clothed in the Dominican habit and interred in the church of St. Mark, and there his ashes repose beside the remains of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, who expired on the very day of Charles VIII.'s entry into Florence.[2] Pico had long entertained a desire to join the fraternity of St. Mark's, but delaying too long to carry out his intent, was surprised by death at the early age of thirty-two years.[3] On his death-bed he, too, had besought Savonarola to allow him to be buried in the robe he had yearned to wear.

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[1] Commines, "Memoires," liv. viii. chap ix.
[2] Ibid. and Sismondi, "Hist. des Rép. Ital.," chap. xciii.
[3] Parenti, "Storia Fiorentina," MS. cit., loc. cit., sheet 479.

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[1] "The vituperation poured upon him (Poliziano) was caused less by his vices than by the hatred Piero de' Medici had excited in our city" (Parenti, loc. cit.).

[2] These are the inscriptions to be found in the Church of St. Mark:

"D.M.S.
Johannes iacet hic Mirandula cætera norūt
Et Tagus et Ganges forsan et Antipodes
Ob. an. Sal. MCCCCLXXXXIIII. vix. an. xxxii.

Hieronimus Benivienius ne disiunctus post
Mortem locus ossa separet quor. animas
In vita coniunxit amor hac humo
Supposita poni curavit
Ob. an. MDXXXXII. vix. an. lxxxix. Mens. vi."

Below this tablet is the one dedicated to Poliziano:

"Politianus
In hoc tumulo iacet
Angelus unum
Qui caput et linguas
Res nova tres habuit
Obiit an. MCCCCLXXXXIV.
Sep. xxiv.—Aetatis
XL."

[3] Pico's long hesitation led Savonarola to doubt for a moment whether his friend could be saved, since he had apparently resisted the call vouchsafed him by the Lord. But the Friar afterwards had a vision in which he beheld Pico borne up to heaven by angels. Thereupon he felt assured that his friend was in Purgatory, and stated his belief to the people from the pulpit. *Vide* the conclusion of sermon vi. in the "Prediche sopra Aggeo."

The end of these two celebrated Italians recalled to mind the last hours and last confession of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and was by many regarded as a sign that the Medicean adherents had been unwilling to pass away without acknowledging their crimes, without asking pardon from the people whom they had so deeply oppressed, and from the Friar, who was, as it were, the people's best representative. It was certainly remarkable that all these men should turn to the Convent of St. Mark, whence had issued the first cry of liberty, and the first sign of war against the tyranny of the Medici.

CHAPTER IV.

POLITICAL CONDITION OF FLORENCE, AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF THE FRENCH, SAVONAROLA PROPOSES A NEW FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

(December, 1494.)

IT had always been the old custom in Florence to accomplish changes of government by means of *Parlamenti*. When the great bell rang the summons to Parlamento, the people assembled, unarmed, on the Piazza, which was guarded by the armed attendants of the Signory. Then the members of the Signory appeared on the balcony[1] (ringhiera) in front of the palace, and asked the right of Balìa for themselves or their friends. The Balìa really signified *carte blanche* to do as they chose, for it was a species of dictatorship, conferred either for months or for years; it might be frequently renewed, and gave its holders the power of electing magistrates, or of even changing the form of government. In the latter case the population was again summoned to *Parlamento*, and deceived by this false show of liberty, always proved a docile instrument in the hands of ambitious and powerful citizens, and was always eager to applaud any proposal for Balìa, in the belief that it was thus giving a proof of its independence at the very moment that it was rivetting its bonds. This was the origin of the ancient Florentine proverb: "*Chi disse Parlamento, disse guastamento*" (To speak of Parliament was to speak of detriment). It was by the help of *Balìe* and *Parlamenti* that the Albizzi so long dominated Florence, and the tyranny of the Medici had been carried on by the same means. Nevertheless, so strong was the force of custom, that on December 2nd, 1494, a few days after the French had gone, the great bell of the palace rang forth a summons to Parlamento. The armed servants of the Signory guarded all the issues of the square, and the people, highly satisfied with their own importance, assembled *in the old way*, *i.e.*, ranged in different *Compagnie*, each under its own gonfaloniere.[1] Then the Signory read out a *provvisione* (proposal), in which they begged for authorization to name twenty *Accoppiatori* with the *Balìa*, or right of electing the Signory and all the principal magistrates for the term of one year. These Accoppiatori were authorized, subject to certain rules and restrictions, to nominate some of their own number to all the offices of State, including that of Gonfalonier of Justice.[2] The multitude, almost crazed

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[1] The *ringhiera* was on the platform attached to the façade of the palace, in the place where the Marzocco now stands, beside the outer steps.

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[1] Parenti, "Storia di Firenze" (Cod. orig. cit.), sheet 209^{t}.

[2] This law, after treating of the election of the *Accoppiatori*, goes on to say: "The which Twenty thus elected, shall be held as, and to be Accoppiatori for one year from the present time. And during the said year they shall have authority to elect (*imborsare*) the Signory, the Gonfalonier of Justice, and their Notary. . . ." Archivio Fiorentino, "Consigli Maggiori, Provvisioni, Regristi," vol. clxxxvi. at sheet 1 and fol.

Rinuccini, "Ricordi Storici," p. clv., says: "The Signory appeared in the Ringhiera, and there had a petition read aloud, asking, among other clauses, that the *Otto di Balìa* should be elected by open choice (*a mano*) once for all; and that the election to the three chief offices should also be made at the free pleasure of the Twenty Accoppiatori for the term of one year; and that of the *Dieci di libertà e pace* for the term of six with delight, burst into shouts of applause; and in this way the new government, known as that of The Twenty, came into existence.

In past times the government of the Florentine Republic was vested in eight Priors and a Gonfalonier of Justice, who constituted the supreme magistracy or Signoria, and were changed every two months. The functions of the sixteen Gonfaloniers of the Companies, under whom, at one time, all arm-bearing citizens were enrolled, together with the twelve *Buoni Uomini* (*Worthies*), were afterwards reduced to acting as an escort for the Signory; the whole number together constituted the Collegii (Colleges), and these were also designated the Three Higher Offices. Then came the Ten of War (*Dieci di Guerra*), elected every six months, and the Eight of Guard and Custody (*Otto di guardia e balìa*), whose chief duty was to act as a tribunal for criminal and political cases, and who were elected every four months. Lastly, there were the two Councils or Assemblies of the People and the Commune, dating from the time when the city was divided into the people proper and the powerful

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months; and that the *Otto di guardia e balìa*, now in office, should be superseded."

Nardi, vol. i. p. 60, gives almost identical details. Here it may be useful to explain the terms—*imborsare*, *tenere le borse serrate*, *tenere le borse aperte*, &c.—so frequently met with in all accounts of the Florentine Republic. Two *borse* or purses were generally provided in the election of the principal officers of the State. One of these *borse* was used by the Greater Guilds (*Arti Maggiori*), the other by the Lesser Guilds (*Arti Minori*), to hold the names of the different candidates proposed for office (*a sedere*). The process of drawing the names being termed *lo squittinio*, the candidates thus drawn were called *squittinati* or *imborsati*. The election might be for six months, one year, or even for a longer period. At every election of magistrates the names of the candidates were drawn by lot from the purses, and this was termed an election by closed purses (*tenere le borse serrate*); but if it was decided that the Accoppiatori were to have the right of choosing at their own pleasure any of the names contained in the purses, instead of choosing them by lot, this was called an election by open purses, or by purses in hand (*tenere le borse aperte, le borse a mano*).

citizens (potenti), who claimed for themselves the special right of constituting the Commune. These Councils were charged with the enactment of laws and the election of magistrates, and the latter duty was considered to be the highest function of government and chief safeguard of liberty.[1] When the Medici began to take the lead in Florence they levelled all distinctions between the different orders of citizens, subjecting all alike to their tyranny. Thus the two Councils of the People and the Commune lost all their special functions, but nevertheless still continued to hold meetings, both as a matter of form, and because their new masters recognized that the people were more tenacious of nominal rights than of real liberty. Lorenzo the Magnificent adhered to the same policy and sanctioned both the Assemblies; but, at the same time, created another Council, known as the Seventy, solely composed of his own partizans. By transferring to this body the chief functions of the old Councils, especially the election of the magistrates, he thus succeeded in becoming master of the Republic.[2]

But now, when the general Parliament was convoked, all the old institutions were left intact, the Council of Seventy alone being abolished, and its functions transferred to the Twenty Accoppiatori; so that although persons and names were altered, there was little real change in the form of government. The magistrates' duties were then so imperfectly defined that each one of them believed himself omnipotent. The real administration of the State was entirely in the hands of the Signory. They passed the laws, despatched ambassadors, declared war, and frequently acted as a tribunal of justice, pronouncing sentences of death and confiscation. Besides, in addition to the great authority conferred upon them by their statutes, they could always find special means of extending their rights.[1] But some check was put upon their arbitrary power by their term of office being limited to two months; and accordingly the members of the Signory had practically less authority than their electors, since, whereas they were displaced at the end of this short period, the latter preserved the direction of State affairs, if not permanently, at least for many years.[2] Lorenzo had skilfully carried out this plan by means of his Council of Seventy, and every one expected that the people would be equally successful with the help of the Twenty.

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[1] *Vide* Giannotti, "Della Repubblica Fiorentina"; Guicciardini, "Del Reggimento di Firenze," vol. ii. of the "Opere inedite"; our own articles on the same subject in the "Politecnico" of Milan (March, 1866, and following numbers), and the "Nuova Antologia" (July, 1869); and particularly the original *Statuti* and *Provvisioni*, which alone can give the reader an exact idea of these imperfectly investigated details.

[2] The Marquis Gino Capponi published the law by which Lorenzo called this Council into existence, with an explanation of the full importance of this tyrannical institution. *Vide* "Arch. Stor. It.," vol. i.

But, as was soon perceived, the course of events by no means fulfilled these expectations. The Republic was in the hands of the Accoppiatori, but the wheels of the State stood still, and although the Accoppiatori had nominal authority over all things, they were practically masters of none. The Medici, Albizzi, and other powerful families, surrounded by friends of great wealth and enormous prestige, had found it possible to rule the city on this plan; but what could be done by twenty citizens of various conditions, views, and modes of thought, many of whom moreover were quite inexperienced in State affairs? So, notwithstanding their legal authority, they soon found that they had neither the capacity nor the strength to govern, and their chief source of weakness was the want of harmony among themselves. The first instance of this was given when they had to elect the Gonfalonier. None of their candidates obtained more than three votes, so that at last, to their great disgrace, the Accoppiatori decided to choose the first who obtained a majority, even if less than the number prescribed by law.[1]

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[1] Guicciardini, in his "Reggimento di Firenze" (p. 282 and fol.), makes admirable remark on this subject; so, too, Giannotti in his "Della Repubblica Fiorentina."

[2] Guicciardini, *ibid.*; Giannotti, *ibid.*

Thus the old custom of *Parlamenti* quickly gave birth to the old disturbances, and before the new Government had fairly begun, all were proposing to change it. Every one recognized the folly of hoping to resuscitate the Republic by means of old institutions which had been reduced by the Medici to mere phantoms. It was clear that only a corpse had been placed in the hands of the Accoppiatori, and accordingly they could not be expected to breathe fresh life into it. Therefore the Florentines began to cogitate some radical change and reconstruction of the Government; but on setting to work they found that the stringency of their need greatly increased the difficulties of the task. For they were harassed on all sides by new and unexpected obstacles.

The rebellion of Pisa was daily assuming graver proportions. In that city the pressure of danger had produced concord: a Government had been speedily constituted; men, arms, and money collected; and all the citizens were inspired by an ardent zeal for liberty and independence. The rest of the Florentine territory was in a very tottering condition. Arezzo and Montepulciano, encouraged by the example of Pisa and by money and advice from Siena, had already risen in revolt, and other cities and towns were preparing to do the same. Thus Florence was hard-pressed to meet the expenses of three wars, and fulfil its engagements to the French king, who was already clamouring to be paid in advance. Soldiers had to be hired, recruits levied, captains engaged, and new and heavier taxes imposed on the already over-burdened people. Even a strong and united Government would have found it difficult to meet all these demands, and the present one was so weak and disunited that some change was imperatively required.

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[1] Nardi, "Istorie di Firenze," vol. i. p. 82.

Unfortunately, during the sixty years which had elapsed since the return of Cosimo de' Medici, the Florentine citizens had entirely lost their former marvellous political aptitude for framing new laws and institutions, so that now, when suddenly emancipated and their own masters, they seemed only confused and bewildered by their independence. There was no longer, as in the days of the Albizzi, a patrician class fitted to take the lead in public affairs. Under the Medici, the only privilege allowed to the wealthier citizens had been that of enjoying their riches; so that they had been content to live at ease, filling what public offices were to be obtained by favour, and going through life without any experience of, or liking for, business of the State. As for the lower classes, they were thoroughly disorganized. The ancient trade associations, or guilds, once the centres of industrial and political life, whose workshops had supplied the enormous wealth expended on long and difficult wars, and which had formed the arena wherein artizans had been trained in politics by their struggles among themselves, and learnt the art of giving good counsel and brave service to the State—all these ancient associations now existed only in name. The multitude had no longer a corporate existence, nor any confidence in itself. Therefore the organization of a new Government was a task of exceeding difficulty, not only because the city was burdened with wars, the old institutions devoid of vitality, and the people of political training; but likewise because none of the ancient Republican forms was at all suited to the new state of things.

And, besides lacking the necessary aptitude, the people had no leaders to guide it in the hard and important enterprise of framing a new constitution. We have seen that Francesco Valori was able to sway the mob and lead it on to expel the Medici; but although incomparably well fitted for a street orator, he was disqualified for any high position in the State by his impetuous temper and want of self-control. We have seen how Piero Capponi won immortality by his defiance of the sovereign and captains of France, but he also lacked statesmanlike patience in debate. At moments when it was best to cut short discussion by grasping the sword, Piero Capponi was in his true element, but to sit quietly in cloak and hood, through lengthy, hair-splitting debates, was simply unendurable to him. He was far more at ease in his armour, exposed to sunshine or storm or the enemy's shots. In fact his most earnest desire was to be sent to the camp before Pisa, and to open the campaign without delay.

In this dire emergency Florence knew not in whom to trust, nor was it easy to hope that new men might be found to meet the occasion. For, as we have already shown, there had been sixty years of tyranny, and during two generations men had lost all familiarity with public affairs. Nevertheless, as there is always some compensation for every ill, a school of Italian politicians was already rising up in Florence, destined to give good fruit in Niccolò Machiavelli, Francesco Guicciardini, and Donato Giannotti, and these men were all in their first youth at the moment when their country regained its freedom. So great was the inborn love of liberty distinguishing the Florentines, that from the moment Republican institutions were destroyed, they began to discuss Government affairs, and created the science of statesmanship. On opening their works we find that they always begin by stating that man's greatest happiness on earth consists in having a share in the government of his country, and that when deprived of this by tyranny, his sole resource is to seek happiness in intellectual pursuits, wait for better times, and accumulate experience for the benefit of posterity. But this budding science could offer no efficacious remedy for the load of ills then burdening the city. As yet none of the new school of thinkers had attained sufficient eminence to be able to impose his will upon the people; and further, the youths of most talent, having nearly all led a lonely student life, had no practical knowledge of politics, were unknown to the crowd, and had no chance of attracting notice in times of disturbance when the world is to the strong. Nevertheless, it was during this revolution that their minds were trained and their theories shaped. And as their ideas then began to spread and prevail, it is important for us to examine their groundwork and substance.

Modern political science is based upon general principles; while the modern art of government consists in an endeavour to obtain the most equal division of power, the soundest administration of justice, the greatest official independence, and the widest extension of individual liberty. But at the close of the fifteenth century Italian political science was little more than a studious analysis of the passions of mankind. Starting from the sole premise that to govern was the greatest happiness and highest ambition of man, it was naturally concluded that all men must be ambitious of power, and every one aspire to grasp the reins of government in his own country, to the exclusion and injury of his fellow-citizens. This state of things necessarily led to continual danger of tyranny; and, in fact, almost all the Italian States had fallen a prey to despotism. In those days, when Italian politicians were asked to define a perfect form of government, they invariably replied, "That in which tyranny is impossible." But what is the form of government under which tyranny is impossible? That which is so ordered as to satisfy the aspirations of all classes of citizens at one and the same time. In every city, they said, there will always be a few men eager to hold command over the rest; patricians (ottimati) who will always strive for honours, and people for freedom.[1] Hence, all endeavoured to find some mixed form of government, an amalgamation of the monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic elements, fitted to satisfy alike the cravings of ambitious leaders, patricians, and people. This, they judged, was the only means by which liberty could be firmly established.

On passing from theory to practice, Florentine politicians always took Venice as their model. This was the only Government in Italy that had survived the general ruin; the only Government that had increased its power and prestige without falling under the sway of a despot. Consequently Florence, like the other extinguished Italian Republics, longed to be revived in the form of the Venetian commonwealth, that seemed to them the perfection of government. And, in fact, on comparing the interminable vicissitudes of the Florentine State with the strict and lasting repose of the Venetian lagoons, the same impression was produced that is felt by ourselves when comparing the political state of France with that of England. But in planning to bestow the Venetian form of government upon Florence, the citizens were met by the same difficulties which the French would have to face if they attempted to adopt the English constitution. From the remotest times Venice had possessed a strong and powerful aristocracy; but this order having long disappeared in Florence, there now seemed to be no alternative save between absolute tyranny or equally absolute anarchy. Nevertheless there was a general desire to introduce some modified form of the Venetian government; some wished to establish it on a wider, some on a narrower basis; but every one agreed that of all models this was the best and most practicable. And wherever men gathered together in Florence, in the streets, or under the arcades, this was the main theme of discourse and argument.

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[1] Giannotti gives a minute exposition of this theory as the basis of his own political creed. It is also repeated in Machiavelli and Guicciardini, although presented by these authors in a new and original shape. It frequently occurs in the writings and speeches of Savonarola's contemporaries, and was afterwards lucidly formulated by Savonarola in his "Trattato circa il Reggimento e Governo della città di Firenze."

But while the scheme remained in the abstract, and as a mere topic of street talk, it was as fruitless as steering a vessel without a compass. Some one was needed to stand forth in the councils of the State to guide and persuade his colleagues, and above all to win the favour of the Twenty Accoppiatori, without whose consent no change could well be effected. In this condition of affairs, when men of learning had little practical experience, and men of action little prudence or ability, another order of citizens began to rise into notice. This was the legal class, in whose hands fortune often places the helm of the State during a nation's passage from servitude to freedom. Owing to their professional training and knowledge of legal matters, lawyers are commonly credited with all the doctrine and practice required to cope with similar emergencies; nor have the painful results of past experience availed to teach the world that no nation has ever been enabled to found a stable constitution by the help of that class.

Accordingly, after long hesitation in the palace councils, the measures proposed by Messer Guidantonio Vespucci and Messer Paolo Antonio Soderini, both doctors of law, finally carried the day. Soderini belonged to the popular party, and having long been ambassador to Venice, had enjoyed special opportunities of gaining a thorough acquaintance with its method of government. He proposed, therefore, to replace the two Councils of the People and the Commune by one greater General Council of the People, similar to the Grand Council of Venice, for the purpose of electing magistrates and passing laws; and one Lesser Council, composed of *ottimati*, or men of greater weight and experience on the pattern of the Council of the Pregati, for the discussion of delicate affairs best settled by a few. He also proposed to abolish the Twenty without delay, but to maintain the Signory, the Council of Eight, the Council of Ten, and the Gonfaloniers of the Companies. No opposition was made to the latter clauses of his proposal; but there was great divergence of opinion regarding the formation of the councils, especially of the Greater. The *ottimati* were strongly opposed to this measure, and Vespucci threw his weight on their side. He dilated at length on the incapacity and excesses of the multitude, recalled all the worst episodes of Florentine history, and added that the Greater Council of Venice was composed of gentlefolk, not of the people, although the lower classes of that city were far more serious, quiet, and sober-minded than those of Florence, where men had keener wits, quicker imaginations, and less controlled passions. But his adversaries declared in return that a Venetian gentleman was no more than a Florentine citizen, since the populace held no rights of citizenship in Florence, that as no patrician order existed, a limited government would always lead to the tyranny of the few; and, finally: that inasmuch as the expulsion of the Medici was owed to the people, it would be unjust to exclude from all share in the government the very class by whose means the restoration of liberty had been accomplished.[1] Not only the people at large, but all the wiser heads in the city were in favour of Soderini's views; but Vespucci had one year at least, the funds of the Pisan University;[1] if these should not suffice, let us take the church plate and decorations, and I will be the first to set you the example. But, above all, pass a law that shops may be opened and work provided for the populace now idling in the streets."[2] Afterwards, in treating of the state of the Church, he declared that the Lord would renovate all things; and gave a sermon in which he continually repeated the text: "Let us sing a new song unto the Lord," and expounded it to the Florentines in the following manner:—"It is the Lord's will that ye should renew all things, that ye should wipe away the past; so that nought may be left of the old evil customs, evil laws, and evil government." But, then, as though fearing to touch too nearly upon politics, he again spoke of the Church, saying: "This is the time for words to give place to deeds, vain ceremonies to real feelings. The Lord said: 'I was a hungered, and ye gave Me no meat; I was naked, and ye clothed Me not.' He did not say: Ye built Me not fine churches, nor fine convents. He did but exhort ye to works of charity; therefore by charity shall all things be renewed."[3] Thus, his first sermons on Haggai show that he was still hesitating and doubtful whether or no to plunge into politics.

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[1] The speeches of Soderini and Vespucci are well known, and are given in Guicciardini's "Storia d'Italia."

But as public agitation increased, these sermons made less effect on his flood of hearers, and the Friar was almost driven by force to act as a citizen. He beheld a whole people bewildered, desolate, in need of help, and with no confidence in any one save himself. He saw the vanity of learning, the incapacity of prudent men, the wickedness of others, while his own common sense, strong determination, and sincere love of goodness left him in no doubt as to the path to be pursued. He rose above himself, was conscious of having the power to soothe discord and direct men's wills towards religion and liberty; he felt able to infuse his own devotion and his own soul into the whole people. It was then that he cried, "O Florence! I cannot express to thee all that I feel. . . . Could I but tell thee all, thou wouldst behold a new vessel, a sealed vessel, full of boiling must, that vainly seeks to force an issue."[1]

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[1] The University re-established by Lorenzo de' Medici was now closed in consequence of the revolt of Pisa, and a few only of its chairs had been transferred to Prato. Consequently its revenues were available for other purposes, and it was certainly best to apply them to the relief of the poor.

[2] Sermon vii., *sopra Aggeo* (on Haggai).

[3] Sermon viii., ibid.

He uttered these words on December 12th, the third Sunday in Advent, and the same day made more decided allusions to politics. He began by explaining a theory already much diffused in the schools, namely, that an absolute monarchy is the best of all governments under a good prince, but the worst under a bad one, inasmuch as it is the strongest and most united both for good and for evil, and is typical of God's empire over nature, which seeks unity in all things.[2] Such was the language of the school, and such the text of Savonarola's first political discourse. But as he went on his good sense came to the rescue, and he left the old formulas behind. "These principles," he added, "should be modified according to the nature of the people to whom they are applied. Among northern nations, where there is great strength and little intellect, and among southern nations, where, on the other hand, there is great intellect and little strength, the rule of a single despot may sometimes be the best of governments. But in Italy, and above all in Florence, where both strength and intellect abound, where men have keen wits and restless spirits, the government of one can only result in tyranny. The sole form of government suited to our needs is a civil and general government. Woe to thee, Florence, if thou choosest a head to dominate and oppress all the rest! From heads come all the evils by which cities are ruined. The word 'tyrant' signifies a man of evil life, of greater wickedness than other men, an usurper of others' rights, a destroyer of his own soul and the soul of the people. Wherefore let this be the first of thy laws, that henceforth no man shall be head of thy city, for otherwise thou wilt have built on the sand. Those who would fain rise above other men, and cannot tolerate civil equality, are always desperately wicked, destroyers of souls and of States.

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[1] Sermon xiii., *sopra Aggeo* (on Haggai).

[2] These ideas are fully expounded in the treatise, "De Regimine Principium," attributed to St. Thomas Aquinas, and were still very generally diffused among Florentine politicians in Savonarola's day. They had been adopted by Ficino; certain traces of them are visible in Guicciardini's "Reggimento di Firenze," and Savonarola treated them at greater length in his "Trattato circa il Reggimento e governo della città di Firenze."

"O my people! thou knowest that I have always refrained from touching on the affairs of the State; thinkest thou that I would enter on them at this moment, did I not deem it necessary for the salvation of souls? Thou wouldst not believe me, but now thou hast seen how all my words have been fulfilled; that they are not uttered of my own will, but proceed from the Lord. Hearken ye, then, unto Him that desireth nought but your salvation. Purify the spirit, give heed to the common good, forget private interests, and if ye reform the city to this intent, it will have greater glory than in all past times. In this wise, O people of Florence, shalt thou begin the reformation of all Italy, and spread thy wings over the earth to bear reform to all nations. Remember that the Lord hath given plain tokens that it is His purpose to renew all things, and that thou art the people chosen to begin this great enterprise, provided thou dost follow the commands of Him who calleth and inviteth thee to return to the spiritual life. Open, O Lord, the heart of this people, so that it may comprehend the things which are in me, and which Thou hast revealed to me and commanded.

"Your reform must begin with spiritual things, for these are higher than material things, of which they are the rule and the life; and likewise all temporal good must be subordinate to the moral and religious good, from which it depends. If perchance ye have heard it said 'that States cannot be governed by Paternosters,'[1] remember that this is the maxim of tyrants, of men hostile to God and the common welfare, a rule for the oppression, not for the relief and liberation of the city. For if, on the contrary, ye desire a good government, ye must submit it to God. Certainly I would take no concern for a State that should not be subject to Him.

"Hence, when ye shall have purified your hearts, rectified your aims, condemned gambling, sensuality, and blasphemy, then set to work to frame your government, first making a rough draft of it, afterwards proceeding to details and amendments. And let your first draft, or rather model and basis of government, be conceived in such wise: *that no man may receive any benefit save by the will of the whole people, who must have the sole right of creating magistrates and enacting laws.* The form of government best adapted to this city would be that of a Grand Council on the Venetian plan. Therefore, I would have ye assemble all the people under the sixteen Gonfaloniers, and let each of the companies propose a form; from the sixteen forms thus obtained let the Gonfalonier select four, and present them to the Signory, who, after first engaging earnestly in prayer, will choose the best of the four forms. And whichever shall be chosen by the people in this manner, ye may be assured that it cometh from God. I believe that the Venetian model will be the one chosen, and ye need hold it no shame to imitate the Venetians, because they, too, received it from the Lord, whence all good things come. Ye have seen how, since that government has been established in Venice, no factions nor dissensions of any sort have arisen, therefore we must needs believe that it exists by God's will."[1]

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[1] This was a well-known saying of Cosimo the Elder, who was also accustomed to declare *that with two ells of red cloth one could make a good citizen* ("Con due canne di panno rosato si fa un uomo dabbene").

After the sermon he added a few words regarding certain special measures that were no less urgently required. One of these was a revision of the taxes, which, while weighing on the lower classes with incredible injustice, gave such scanty returns, that, although all complained of being too heavily taxed, the city was always hard pressed for money. He also suggested that all important posts should be filled by chosen nominees, leaving only minor offices to be drawn by lot; in this way every citizen might hope to obtain a share in the government. He then concluded by recommending public prayers, and a general reconciliation of all the citizens both of the old and the new State.[2]

In his preceding sermons,[3] Savonarola had touched lightly on some of these ideas; but from this day (December 12th) he devoted himself to their exposition, and with so much acumen as to excite the marvel of all hearers. Considering what his life and his studies had been, no one would have believed him capable of this minute discussion of State affairs. And the measures he proposed were deemed so wise and prudent, that the Signory frequently asked his advice at St. Mark's, and even sent for him to the palace, where he occasionally consented to deliver a sermon.[4] At last the day came when he gathered all the magistrates and people—women and children excepted—in the Duomo and exhorted them to turn their minds chiefly to the following points: first, to the fear of God and reformation of manners; secondly, to zeal for the popular government and public welfare, in preference to all private interests; thirdly, to a general reconciliation, whereby the friends of the past Government should be absolved of all their crimes, even their fines remitted, and indulgence be shown towards all debtors of the State; fourthly, to a form of ***universal government***, comprising all citizens who, in virtue of the city's ancient statutes, were entitled to a share in the State.[1] And the preacher suggested, as the best model, a Government on the pattern of the Grand Council of Venice, with certain modifications suited to the temper of the Florentine people.[2]

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[1] See the whole of Sermon xiii., *sopra Aggeo* (on Haggai).

[2] Sermon xiii.

[3] Especially in Sermon viii.

[4] Violi, as quoted by Barsanti (p. 86), says in his "Giornata," xi. (Cod. cit., sheet 157ᵗ): "When the form of the new Government was under consideration, he (Savonarola), together with several other monks,

These proposals, made from the pulpit of Sta Maria del

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was asked to discuss and consider what form would be best and most adapted to the city, in order to preserve their recently recovered liberty; and it was agreed to accept the opinion of Frà Hieronimo, that an universal government shared by all the citizens was better fitted than a government of few, or under a single head, to maintain the peace of the city; and accordingly that government was chosen as the best." The biographers frequently allude to Savonarola's visits to the palace. See "Vita Latina," sheet 18; Burlamacchi, p. 69. At the conclusion of the marginal notes to the Bible preserved in the National Library of Florence, and also in other of Savonarola's holographs, there are some memoranda of sermons given in *Palatio*, *ad Dominos*, and so on.

[1] We shall see that their number was by no means too large, but on the contrary too small.

[2] This sermon is unpublished, but Savonarola gives a minute account of it in his Sermon xxix. upon Job (*sopra Giobbe*). Nardi also speaks of it in detail (vol. i. pp. 58–59), and adds the following remarks: "At that time it was believed that this man knew little of active life, and could only speak of morals in general and with special reference to true Christian philosophy. As to his doctrines, had they been listened to in a right spirit, they would have undoubtedly disposed the minds of our citizens to accept some good and holy form of government. And when he had preached the said things, and repeatedly impressed them on his hearers, the greater part of them were finally carried and decided upon after much difficulty and opposition" (Ibid. p. 60).

Fiore by the Friar Savonarola, whose prophecies had all been fulfilled, and at a moment of general suspense, had great weight with the public, and produced an extraordinary effect. Indeed, all the best historians and politicians of Florence unanimously agree that, but for these sermons, Vespucci's proposal would have been carried at the palace, and led to fresh tumults and revolutions.[1] But when the Friar's voice was raised in the cause of liberty, no further resistance was possible. Up to this time the people had been in a state of uncertainty without knowing what to decide, but now all doubt disappeared, their way was clear; nothing would content them but *a Grand Council on the Venetian plan* (*Il Consiglio Grande al modo Viniziano*), and they shouted their decision aloud in the streets.

The element of Divine authority introduced by Savonarola into politics was particularly effectual in Florence, inasmuch as the Republic had always been under the special protection of some saint, and on many occasions religion had joined with the State in the defence of liberty. And, if the spectacle of a Friar preaching politics from the pulpit excited some amazement, this very amazement helped to exalt his authority. Indeed, on studying, not only the historians of the period, but the statements afterwards made in the political writings of men such as Giannotti, Guicciardini, and Machiavelli, regarding the government as it was then constituted, we are almost tempted to believe that a miracle had been wrought in Florence, when a Friar, totally unversed in worldly matters, could succeed in confounding the wise, redeeming his country, and establishing a new Republic. But, on the other hand, this seemed to confirm the old experience, that in great social emergencies one force alone is powerful to save; the pure and unselfish moral force of really great men, namely: fervid earnestness for truth, firm and steadfast aspirations after goodness. In Savonarola all these elements were combined, and formed, indeed, the very essence of his noble character. In moments of trial what learning could compare with wisdom such as this? what prudence boast the victories and conquests such devotion could achieve?

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[1] "In the councils, which were composed of no great number of citizens, the proposal for a somewhat limited form of government would certainly have prevailed, had not the Divine authority mingled in the counsels of men through the mouth of Girolamo Savonarola of Ferrara, a friar of the preaching order. He . . . in these days publicly expressing his detestation of the form of government proposed in Parliament, declared it to be the will of God that an absolutely popular government should be chosen, and in such a way that it should be out of the power of a few citizens to infringe the security or liberty of the rest; and thus, reverence for so great a name according with the desires of the majority, even those who felt differently were unable to resist the general inclination" (Guicciardini, "Storia d'Italia," chap. ii. pp. 164–165). In his "Storia Fiorentina," Guicciardini wrote that Savonarola did not treat politics from the sole standpoint of general principles, but in full detail, so that one might have supposed him born and trained to the government of States. See the note at the close of the next chapter, and Nardi's remarks in the "Discorso" given in the Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xviii.

Is any excuse, then, required to justify the Friar's entrance into politics? Is it necessary to repeat that he sought to establish liberty, and assure the triumph of faith? Must we cite the example and authority of other churchmen and monks who pursued the same course? We need only dwell on the fact that Savonarola did not enter into politics of his own choice, but only, as we have seen, when impelled by the irresistible force of events. It may also be added that no profession, no vows, no laws are binding against the laws of nature, or against the vow that every honest man has sworn to himself—to strive to do good in every way and in all times and conditions.

But these hypotheses may be left aside; the step was taken and led to many and unavoidable consequences. Savonarola suddenly found himself the head of all

Florence, and had to hasten the organization of the new government in order to checkmate its many assailants. Piero de' Medici had already gone to the French camp near Naples, and been favourably received by the monarch who so unworthily justified his title of *Protector of Florentine liberty.* At the first turn of fortune there was a tyrant ready to pounce upon Florence. Hence the most strenuous labour was required to complete the constitution of the popular government, and give it unity, power, and prestige, to save the republic from again falling a prey to oppression. We shall now see the masterly prudence and wisdom shown by Savonarola in all the fundamental laws he proposed for the new State, and how the whole people became so inspired and penetrated by his influence, that every one seemed suddenly to share his ideas and echo his speech.

CHAPTER V.

CONSTITUTION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT THROUGH SAVONAROLA'S EFFORTS—THE GREATER COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL OF EIGHTY—A NEW SCHEME OF TAXATION, BASED ON THE "DECIMA," OR TAX OF TEN PER CENT. ON REAL PROPERTY—DISCUSSION ON THE LAW FOR A GENERAL PACIFICATION AND THE REPEAL OF THE LAW "DALLE SEI FAVE," THE WHICH REPEAL IS CARRIED—THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TRIBUNAL OF MERCHANDISE OR COMMERCE—RESIGNATION OF THE ACCOPPIATORI—THE ABOLITION OF "PARLAMENTI"—FOUNDATION OF THE MONTE DI PIETÀ—VERDICT OF ITALIAN POLITICIANS ON THE REFORMS INTRODUCED BY SAVONAROLA.

(1494-1495.)

FOR the full comprehension of Savonarola's importance as a statesman, it is requisite to follow step by step the formation of the new Government, and also to read the sermons he delivered during that period. When we see that every new law was preceded by one or more discourses setting forth the subject with explanatory advice to the people—when we attend the debates of the Signory [1] in the Palace, and hear all these citizens carrying on their discussions in the Friar's own language, and propounding his arguments in his very words, so that we might almost believe their speeches to be copied from his sermons, and the law under consideration quoted from one of his epistles, we shall then be able to realize how this man had become the leading spirit of the entire people.[1] And when, this examination ended, we shall have gathered all the various laws together, and reconstructed the government as a whole, we shall find it admirable in all its parts, and completely harmonious in its entirety; and hearing the assurances of all the greatest historians and politicians of Italy that this was the best, or indeed the only good government ever possessed by Florence in the whole course of its long and turbulent history, then at last we shall be qualified to form an accurate judgment of Savonarola.

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[1] When the Signory, together with the colleges, and other magistrates and a few specially invited citizens (designated, therefore, as the *Richiesti*), met in Council for the purpose of discussion, they were said to hold a *Pratica*. After 1494 this term was likewise applied to any meeting held by the Signory conjointly with other magistrates and with the Council of Eighty. In the *Libri di Pratiche* of the period there are summaries of the speeches made on these occasions.

His sermons in the Duomo, while the new constitution of the Republic was being organized at the Palace, were the Advent series *on Haggai*, to which must be added eight others on *the Psalms*, delivered on the Sundays after Advent. They are chiefly important from a political point of view, but always retain their religious character, since political reform was only one item of Savonarola's scheme of universal reformation; and the new Government merely the first step towards the regeneration of morals and of the Church. Hence he never suspended his discourses on good morals and true religion: on the contrary, political questions afforded continual opportunities for recurring to those themes. These sermons are not distinguished from the others by any surpassing eloquence, but are undoubtedly the most valuable of all with regard to the history of the times and the story of Savonarola's life. While the other sermons enable us to appreciate his goodness and vast theological learning, these reveal his immense force of character and another side of his intellect. For they contain a complete exposition of the new scheme of government, and, by showing the vicissitudes attending its birth, almost enable us to reconstruct the whole political history of the Florentine Republic during that time.

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[1] This is also confirmed by all the historians of the time. *See*, too the "Discorso" of Jacopo Nardi, in the Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xviii.

We have already noted how, on the 12th December, Savonarola resolutely entered on his new career, and what principles of government he recommended. We see that by the 22nd and 23rd of the same month, a law of the highest importance was already drawn up in complete conformity with the Friar's views, and that it was passed by an overwhelming majority in the Councils of the People and of the Commune.[1] This law or *provision*, as it was then called, fixed the basis of the new government, and therefore demands our minute examination.[2] For it established a Great Council (*Consiglio Maggiore*) empowered to create all the chief magistrates, and approve all the laws: thus, in other words, rendering it the sovereign power in the State. All citizens were eligible as members of this Council, provided they had attained the age of twenty-nine years, and were *netti di specchio*, *i.e.*, had paid their taxes; and were *beneficiati*,[3] which, by the terms of an ancient law, signified those who had been

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[1] It was carried in the former by 229 black beans against 35 white, and in the latter by 195 against 16. Archivio Florentino, "Provvisioni Registri," No. 186, sheet 1 and fol., second numbering. It is well known that it was the Florentine custom for the opposition to vote with white beans; hence the expression to *whiten* a law meant to reject it.

[2] It is designated by contemporary historians as the Great or General Council; but in official documents it is called the Greater Council (*Consiglio Maggiore*).

[3] *Vide* Pitti, p. 227 of his "Apologia dei Cappucci" (published in the "Arch. Stor. It.," vol. iv. part ii.).

seen or *seated* (*veduti o seduti*)[1] in one of the higher magistracies, or had enjoyed this *benefit* (*beneficio*) in the person of their father, grandfather, or great-grandfather. It is needless to inquire into the origin and purport of this ancient law : we are only concerned here with the fact that instead of all the citizens being eligible for the Greater Council (as was asserted by those who objected to the new government on the score of its being too democratic), only the *beneficiati* could sit in it. And the new law further provided that whenever the *beneficiati* exceeded the number of 1,500, they were to be *sterzati*, *i.e.*, divided into three parts, each of the which parts was to constitute the Council for the term of six months. At the first election it was found that in all the population of Florence, amounting to about 90,000 souls,[2] there were only 3,200[3] *beneficiati* of the required age, so that for eighteen months the Council had to be formed of little more than a thousand members in turn.[4] No meeting was valid unless two-thirds of the members called were present. Another provision of the new law was, that "to encourage the younger and incite the elder men to virtue," every three years sixty *non-beneficiati* citizens, and twenty-four youths aged twenty-four years, were to be chosen to sit in the Greater Council.[1] And, from the 15th January next ensuing, the Council was authorized to elect eighty citizens of forty years and above to form the Council of Eighty, which was to change its members every six months. This Council was always in attendance on the Signory, who were obliged to consult with it at least once a week; and conjointly with the colleges, and other magistrates, it nominated ambassadors and commissaries of war, engaged mercenaries, and arranged other important affairs, such as could not be decided in public.

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[1] Giannotti, "Della Republica Fiorentina," bk. ii. chap. vii. pp. 113-114.

[2] Zuccagni Orlandini derives this number from the number of births registered in San Giovanni, and the same figure is also given by other writers. Marin Sanudo ("La Spedizione di Carlo VIII.," p. 133) says that Florence "counts 128,000 souls, and 15,000 foreigners." We do not know on what grounds the Venetian chronicler based this assertion, and it is known that all calculations were made very loosely in those days. Pagnini ("Della Decima," vol. i. p. 35) does not believe that the number of inhabitants amounted to 90,000.

[3] Rinuccini, "Ricordi Storici," p. clvi.

[4] Pitti contradicts the charge of excessive democracy brought against the new Government in his "Apologia dei Cappucci" (p. 277 and fol.) ; it is also treated at length in Guicciardini's "Reggimento di Firenze," "Storia Fiorentina," and "Storia d'Italia" ; also in the "Storia," and "Discorsi" of Jacopo Nardi.

In this way the basis of the new Government was formed of a Grand Council and a Council of Eighty answering to an assembly of the people and a Senate. When a law was to be passed, whichever member of the Signory was on duty as *Proposto*, rose and proposed it to that body; and if a measure of special importance, after being approved by the Signory and the Colleges, it was further discussed by a *Pratica* of experienced citizens; if not, it was brought at once before the Eighty, and then before the Grand Council, by whom it was finally sanctioned. The Councils were not empowered to discuss laws, but only to vote them; and no member had the right to speak save by the express request of the Signory, and then only in favour of the proposed law. But on every occasion when the Signory asked the opinion of the citizens assembled in *Pratica*, the latter took their places on their respective benches (*nelle pancate*) according to the offices they filled or the order in which they had been elected, and, after consulting together, deputed one of their number to collect their votes and report their different opinions; but if a new law was in question, even then no one was allowed to speak against it. All this was in accordance with the ancient customs of a state, that having freely opened the doors of government to the masses, then sought to keep them in check by ineffectual or injurious expedients.[1] In any case the above regulation concluded with these words: "Forasmuch as the laws of the city are in great confusion, and no magistrate, either within or without the walls, knows his precise duty, it is decreed that a number of citizens should be appointed to gather all the laws together in one volume." The utility of this decree can only be appreciated by those acquainted with the ancient statutes of Florence, and the terrible disorder they were in. For new laws and old were jumbled together, and under the Medicean rule all the laws and institutions of the Republic had been thrown into the wildest confusion.

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[1] Thus, the number of those eligible to the Council went on increasing. By an old MS. bequeathed to the National Library of Florence by Passerini ("Libro della riforma del governo fatta del Savonarola") we find that in 1510 they already amounted to 4,501.

During the two days when the establishment of the Greater Council was under discussion, another decree was passed,[2] for the nomination of a committee of ten citizens, to decide on the whole or partial remittance of unpaid taxes, of fines incurred for non-payment of the same, and to make a general revision of the taxes, levying them upon all real property, even including that of ecclesiastics, provided the requisite permission could be obtained from Rome.

Thus all the measures proposed by Savonarola were carried into effect, and the laws drawn up almost in his own words. The new government was established; the Accoppiatori were forced to resign their now useless office, and the old Councils of the People and the Commune were both to be speedily abolished. The last law of any importance voted by these Councils had been that of the 28th December, repealing for a certain period the duty on weapons brought into the city, in order that all might have facilities for obtaining arms.[1] Under the Signory in office during January and February, 1495, laws were passed by the Council of Eighty,[2] and the Greater Council, who were now charged to complete the new government and bring it to perfection.

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[1] "They were deprived of the right (to speak) in order that the Councils might be driven by weariness to approve the provisions (of the law), whether reasonable or not; and might pronounce judgment after only hearing one side of the question" (Guicciardini, "Opere Inedite," vol. ii. p. 296). Every means was tried to enable the Signory to carry all measures proposed by them: in fact they were authorized to bring forward the same laws repeatedly during the same day. Even the law by which the Great Council was established empowered the Signory to bring forward the same proposal eighteen times, *i.e.*, at the rate of six times a day.

[2] Archivio Fiorentino, "Registro di Provvisioni" (before quoted), sheet 5 and fol.

The first matter demanding attention was the revision of the taxes.[3] Savonarola continually urged this in his sermons. "Levy taxes on real property alone, abolish continual loans, abolish arbitrary imposts:" such was his advice to the authorities. But to the people he said: "Citizens! I would have ye steadfast in devotion and help to your Commune. The son owes so much to his father that he can never do enough for him. Wherefore I say unto ye—your Commune is your father, and thus each one of you is bound to give it assistance. And if thou wouldst say, I get no good from it, know that thou mayest not say this, inasmuch as the Commune protects thy property, thy household, and thy children. Rather thou shouldst step forth and say: Behold, here are fifty florins, a hundred, a thousand. Thus do good citizens who love their country."[4] And while, on the one hand, the whole system of taxation was undoubtedly most unjust, and in greater disorder than can well be described; on the other, the popular discontent, although justly excited in the first instance, had now reached so excessive a pitch, that many expected the new government to relieve them of all burdens.

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[1] In the Council of the People this law was carried by 203 black beans against only 2 white; and in the Council of the Commune by 166 against 9 ("Registro di Provvisioni" (before quoted), sheet 10).

[2] Rinuccini, "Ricordi," p. clvii., and "Registro" (above quoted), sheet 46 and fol. The first law was that voted the 29th and 31st of January.

[3] See the Sermons "sopra Aggeo," among others, No. xiii.

[4] "Prediche sopra Amos," and especially the sermon delivered on Easter Tuesday.

In the days of the first Florentine Republic men lived so frugally that the revenues of the customs sufficed for the maintenance of the State. Afterwards voluntary loans were raised to carry on wars, but as these loans became more and more frequent, and were scarcely ever repaid, the credit of the State was so much depreciated that forced contributions had to be levied instead. Then, in all public emergencies the Signory began to tax every citizen *ad arbitrio*, namely, according to their own estimation of his means; and as powerful men always tried to evade these calls, the chief burden consequently fell upon the lower classes and caused general discontent. In 1427 the Medici, in order to win favour with the people and keep down the great families, decreed a *Catasto*, or valuation of the property of all the citizens, so that every one might be justly taxed according to his means. But, despite its apparent fairness, this Catasto proved most unjust and cruel in practice; for even the fluctuating incomes derived from industry and commerce were assessed at a fixed rate, and this innovation roused such tremendous discontent in Florence, that many citizens entirely withdrew from trade. Thus the Catasto dealt the last blow to Florentine commerce. And while causing all this positive injury it remedied none of the existing abuses, for the system of loans was continued, the amount always fixed (*ad arbitrio*) at the discretion of the authorities, and the State was very seldom in a position to repay its creditors. Besides, the assessment of fortunes derived from trade was so uncertain, that it always afforded the Medici a convenient means of favouring their friends and oppressing their enemies.[1] This state of things was still in force when the new law of taxation was brought before the Greater Council on February 5, 1495. It had been drawn up according to Savonarola's ideas, and on such prudent, sound, and sagacious principles, that almost to our own day the taxation of Florence has been regulated on the system introduced by the Friar. For the first time, not only in Florence but in Italy, the new law established a general and regular tax upon property, abolishing all loans and arbitrary assessments, and obliging all citizens to pay ten per cent. on all income from real property, without any right to repayment. This was called the *Decima*, and a new office was created for the just valuation of property and yearly receipt of taxes.[2]

After this weighty undertaking, in which Savonarola played the part of one of the greatest of political reformers, had been thus prudently and wisely concluded, two other measures of no less importance had to be taken under consideration. The first of these was the proposal for a general pacification and pardon, and, thanks to Savonarola's continual exhortations from the pulpit, all seemed unanimous in its favour. Not so with the second, known as the *law of the six beans*, of which a few words must be said, since it led to lengthy discussions in the "Pratica," and was afterwards the cause of great danger and disturbance to the Republic, and of serious and unjust charges against the memory of Savonarola. According to the statutes all political and criminal offences were to be tried by the Eight (*Gli Otto di guardia e balià*), excepting in special cases, when judgment was pronounced by the Signory. The Tribunal of Eight could pass sentences of imprisonment, exile, confiscation, and death, by means of six votes (*sei fave*), and these magistrates being so frequently changed, and party hatreds so rife in Florence, cruelly unjust and preposterous sentences were constantly pronounced. Accordingly all legal men agreed in the necessity of creating some court of appeal which, by curbing the excessive authority of the *Six Beans*, should put a stop to these acts of tyranny; and the proposal was seconded by Savonarola.[1]

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[1] Machiavelli, "Opere," Italia, 1813, vol. i. p. 221.

[2] The subject was fully treated by Pagnini, "Della Decima," 4 vols. Lisbon and Lucca (Florence), 1765–66. This work also contains the provisions of the law for the new tax. The office of the *Decima* lasted down to our own day; and the "Libri della Decima," dating from 1494, are now in the Florence Archives. Some time passed, however, before the law could be brought into effective working order, and permission to impose a permanent tax on ecclesiastical property was only granted by Rome in the year 1516.

Having concluded his course of sermons on Haggai in January and February, 1495, the Friar gave a few upon the Psalms,[2] in which he continually urged the necessity of a general reconciliation, and of appealing from the decisions of the *Sei Fave*. Almost every day he said from the pulpit: "Florence, forgive, and make peace, and cry not again: flesh, and more flesh, blood, and more blood!"[3] And he went on to say: "Some check must be applied to the authority of the *Six Beans, by means of appeal to a council of eighty or a hundred*, chosen from the members of the Grand Council. Thou sayest that this would diminish the power of the Signory; but I tell thee it would rather increase it. Either the Signory seeks to do ill, and should be deprived of all power; or strives to do well, and merits the help of a council of honest citizens."[1] On another occasion he pressingly urged reform in the administration of justice; inveighed against the prevalent use of torture; exhorted men to peace, and again wound up by saying: "I said to thee concerning the Court of the *Six Beans*, that it was needful to give it *a staff to lean upon, in the shape of a Council of Appeal.*"[2] And he continued to insist upon this point, until the Signory was induced to frame a decree, which, after being repeatedly discussed, was at last, on the 15th March, 1495, brought before an unusually numerous *Pratica*, which, in consequence of the special importance of the case,[3] all the principal citizens and magistrates had been summoned to attend. Custom forbade that laws should be in any way made public before being presented; but in this case, although all were acquainted with the new provision, the reading of it was heard with the utmost attention.

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[1] This opinion was shared by the most distinguished politicians of Florence. *Vide* Giannotti, "Della Republica Fiorentina," and Guicciardini, "Del Reggimento di Firenze."

[2] "Prediche sui Salmi." It should be noted that Savonarola began these sermons on the 6th January, 1495 (new style), and gave eight of them; but preached on Job during Lent. Afterwards, on the 1st May, he resumed the course on the Psalms, and continued it to the 28th July, and then gave three more in October. The first series of eight are regarded as a sequel to the Advent sermons on Haggai. *Vide* doc. xvi. (already quoted) in the Appendix to the Italian edition.

[3] "Predica I. sui Salmi."

The first portion was in complete accordance with Savonarola's views; might, indeed, have proceeded from his pen, and ran to the following effect: "Considering the weighty need for union and concord in a well-constituted republic, and in order to follow in the footsteps of our Lord, who, in all that He did, whether journeying, preaching, or resting, always enjoined peace; and considering that the same is to be seen in natural things, which ever seek for unity, according to their kind, wherefore it was said by the philosopher: the strongest virtue is united virtue; and finally, being admonished by the supernatural events we have witnessed this year, in the establishment of our new government, and the mercy vouchsafed us by the Lord, the which mercy it behoves us to imitate—

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[1] Sermon i. "sui Salmi."

[2] "*Un certo bastoncello, cioè quel Consiglio dello appello.*" Sermon ii. "sui Salmi."

[3] It was brought forward on the 6th, 8th, 9th, and finally on the 15th March.

"The magnificent Signory and Gonfaloniers hereby ordain that a general peace be made, that all offences be pardoned and all penalties remitted unto the supporters of the late government."[1]

The second part, consisting of an entirely distinct law, was less in accordance with Savonarola's advice, and was to the effect: "That every citizen eligible to public office who, for any political offence, should be sentenced by the Signory or the Eight either to death, to corporal punishment, or to any fine above the sum of three hundred florins, or to reprimand, imprisonment, &c., should have the right of appeal, for the term of eight days, to the Greater Council. That, in case of such appeal, the Signory should be bound to allow any one to speak in defence of the accused; and within the term of fifteen days to bring the case before the said Council as many as six times in the space of two days, and, furthermore, to acquit the accused if two-thirds of the assembly voted in his favour."[2]

The point on which this law differed from that proposed by Savonarola was one of very decided importance. For instead of establishing, as he had proposed, a right of appeal to a limited Court composed of wise experts in legal matters, appeal was to be made to the Greater Council, whose decisions would be influenced by party spirit rather than justice, and where the ignorance of the many would prevail against the wisdom of the few. The Ottimati had been opposed from the first to any right of appeal, since, being accustomed to have the office of the Eight almost always in their own hands, they could not tolerate the idea of any infringement of its absolute authority. But, on the other hand, the people regarded the Greater Council as the highest power in Florence, on which all authority legally devolved. Party spirit had been rekindled by the conflict in the palace, and the popular side, aware of its superior strength, went to the length of demanding that the mob should pass judgment on the gravest political offences. And the law being already drawn up and brought forward, there was great difficulty in modifying it. As no one was allowed to speak in opposition, it had either to be rejected or accepted. Yet, to reject it was impossible, since its promoters had purposely tacked it on to the law for a general reconciliation which was deemed imperative by all, and also because some right of appeal from the Tribunal of the Six Beans was considered equally expedient.

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[1] Archivio Fiorentino, "Registro di Provvisioni" (before quoted), sheet 82^t and fol.

[2] Same, "Registro di Provvisioni," sheet 83^t.

Nevertheless it is evident, from the debates in the Pratica, that all honest citizens were aware of the abuses to which the bill would lead, and did their best to prevent them. And they might have succeeded but for the artful and almost diabolic devices of the enemies of the new government. For when the latter perceived that not only the people, but men of wisdom and Savonarola himself, alike demanded an appeal from the *Six Beans*, they were convinced that nothing could serve their designs better than the new law, which, being an excessive measure, would give rise to disturbances at the first opportunity; and only in times of disturbance could they hope to change the government and vest all power in the hands of a few of their own party. Therefore, after strenuously combating the right of appeal to a limited council of wise and prudent citizens, they all joined in energetic and almost furious efforts in favour of appeal to the Greater Council. In the Pratica, accordingly, it was seen with much surprise that, whereas the men of the people mode-rated their tone, and the partizans of Savonarola positively ventured to express their disapproval of the law proposed by the Signory, the Ottimati, foes of the new government and adherents of the Medici, employed their best eloquence in its favour. In a volume of fragments of the Pratiche [1] we had the good fortune to find reports of these speeches made by the government notary, and are thus enabled to realize one of the chief and most animated debates of the period. The question was one of high importance, and the speakers were men of authority who brought all their mental powers to bear on its discussion. Their speeches not only serve to show us how laws were discussed and voted on those exceptional occasions, but also throw new light on a little understood event, and exonerate Savonarola from one of the heaviest charges ever brought against him.

The law being duly presented and the opinion of the meeting asked by the Signory, the citizens withdrew to their respective benches, and, after holding noisy consultation, Messer Domenico Bonsi, one of the Accoppiatori, a friend of Savonarola, was the first to speak. Reporting the verdict of his bench, he recommended peace, proving its expedience and necessity by many quotations from the Gospel and St. Paul, and by others from Demosthenes and Aristotle. Proceeding to the question of appeal, he acknowledged that the measure would be useful, but reported that his colleagues were very divided in their views; and then, as though hardly daring to speak against a law proposed by the Signory, he suddenly came to a stop. Thereupon Messer Francesco Gualterotti rose and, after extolling the plan of a general reconciliation, spoke of the necessity of sanctioning appeal from the tyrannical Tribunal of the Eight, who had always oppressed the city with sentences of exile and confiscation. Yet even he found the new law to be so excessive in its tendency, that he ventured to propose that it should not be permanently sanctioned, but only for a time (*a tempo*).

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[1] Archivio Fiorentino, "Consulte e Pratiche," Registro 62. These Pratiche sometimes serve as valuable historical documents. Some of the Miscellanies preserved in the Archives contain fragments of debates and other important documents illustrating obscure or ill-understood points of history.

The discussion now became lively, and one of those who, on the first day of the revolution, had closed the palace door in Piero de' Medici's face, now rose to speak. This was Messer Luca Corsini, a very influential and eloquent man, and one of the most fervent advocates of the popular party. He gave a vivid description of the miserable state of the country, saying: "We behold all Italy stirred by new and terrible dangers; and we ourselves, being in the centre of the land, are exposed to even worse suffering than the rest. Wherefore unity and concord are the only remedies which will avail to preserve us from the attacks of neighbouring potentates, who are already preparing to fall upon us at the first sign of disturbance. Besides, having now given to all the right to sit in our councils, unless we are careful to conciliate some at least of the friends of the old State, they will oppose us, both by the beans and in secret. For if no other reason avail to persuade you," he added, in louder and more impressive tones, "the example of our Lord should suffice, since, after smiting us with His sword of justice, He hath mercifully averted it from our heads and vouchsafed us His pardon. Let us, then, also be merciful; let us ordain a general pardon! And should any one deem this an extraordinary remedy, let him remember that in extraordinary cases the wisest rule is to follow none."

On coming to the question of the "*Six Beans*," he spoke with still greater warmth, asserting the absolute necessity of some new measure. And moved by the democratic spirit which so easily runs to exaggeration, he added: "The Republic consists of one body alone, and this body is the whole people, which, unable itself to attend to every branch of the administration, therefore appoints magistrates. But when doubts, disorders, or dissensions arise, even as we see to be of daily occurrence, there is no injustice in recurring to the Greater Council which represents the people and has conferred office on the magistrates; nor can the authority of the Signory be diminished by an appeal to the people to whom the whole of the Republic belongs. For if we consider what things have come to pass in these latter days, we shall say that it is the highest wisdom and prudence to desire that these laws should be carried."

When Corsini had finished this animated address, all eyes were turned towards Messer Guidantonio Vespucci, who was noted for his eloquence and experience, and one of the most powerful members of the *Ottimati* party. It was he who, during the preceding December, had alleged so many reasons in the palace for opposing the new form of popular government. His learning gave added weight to his opinions; and, conscious of this, he spoke with much emphasis, and displayed his well-known oratorical gifts. He began by carefully praising the discourses of the preceding speakers; who, as he said, "were all labouring in different ways towards the same end—the consolidation of liberty. Also I am well content to see that many have frankly expressed opinions opposed to that of the Signory, for this is the only way to arrive at truth.[1] For my own part," he went on, entering at once into the question of the "Six Beans," "the only plan seems to be to seek a mode of establishing perfect equality among the citizens; if the old road will lead us to that goal, let us follow it; if not, we must choose another path. I certainly deem the old law to be very perilous, and if carefully considered, it will be seen to be neither well-ordered, nor practically good; nor, indeed, does it appear just to give so much power to the Signory, without also granting right of appeal against their decisions. In France appeal can be made to the Council of Paris against the verdict of the King; imperial decisions can be reversed by the Pope, and the sentence of the Papal Chair itself can likewise be appealed against.[1] Hence no one should be angered if others correct errors into which he has been betrayed by haste or inadvertence. And if princes, who are bound by no law, are willing to allow right of appeal, why should it be refused by magistrates whose authority is wholly derived from the people? By granting this power of appeal we shall only restore to the people its own right, and repress the immoderate pretensions of the over-ambitious. It will certainly act as a great check upon tribunals to know that their sentences are subject to the approval of the Greater Council. Accordingly, I see not what harm can be caused by destroying the pernicious authority of the '*Six Beans.*'

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[1] He intended this as an ironical reproof to those who, in violation of the statutes, had ventured to express views somewhat inimical to the measure proposed by the Signory.

"Regarding the peace, unanimously desired by the citizens, nothing need be said, save that the speedier and the more general it be the greater the good. But," he said, finally, "the most useful peace that can be concluded will be to deprive the '*Six Beans*' of the accursed power that has been the source of all discord."[2]

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[1] At this time the Council of Trent had not yet taken place, and that of Constance was still fresh in men's minds; accordingly the doctrine of the right of appeal from the Pope to the Council was still uncondemned by the Church of Rome.

[2] These speeches are all given in the "Frammenti di Pratiche," above quoted. We have endeavoured to reproduce their exact sense and almost their exact words in translating them back from the Notary's Latin reports into the Italian in which they were delivered.

There was great amazement in the assembly on hearing Vespucci so vigorously defend the rights of the people after having opposed them with equal force in the previous December. Nevertheless his speech turned the scale, and on the 18th of March the new law was passed in the Council of Eighty, by 80 votes against 38; and on the 19th in the Greater Council by 543 votes against 163.[1] Such is the true history of a discussion on which all writers have been silent, while charging Savonarola with the authorship of an extreme measure. The accusation is most unjust, for whereas his sermons testify that he was in favour of a far more temperate law, the orator's speeches show that the Friar's adherents almost violated the old parliamentary usages of the Republic in their endeavours to check the excesses of both secret and declared opponents. The latter, however, were triumphant.[2]

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[1] Florence Archives, "Registro di Provvisioni" (before quoted), sheet 84^{t}. The Signory, Colleges, &c., sat in the Council of Eighty (and in the Greater Council also); so that its members exceeded the number indicated by its name.

[2] It should be noted that many contemporary writers either refrained from repeating this charge against Savonarola, or merely spoke of it as an unfounded rumour. But in the sixteenth century, his adversaries maintained the charge, and brought many worshippers of his memory to believe in its truth. Thus, Guicciardini ("Reggimento di Firenze," p. 165) makes Del Nero, when speaking of the Eight *di guardia a balìa*, say these words: "And I would add that which I understand is proposed by this Friar, namely, that whenever a citizen is condemned for political offences—but for no other reason—right of appeal should be allowed; not however as he proposes, to the Greater Council, but to the Senate" [*here the author added in a marginal note to the MS.*]: "It might perhaps be better for this appeal to be made to the *Quarantia* (Forty), so that the magistrate who had given sentence could appear in defence of his verdict." Thus, without being aware of it, Guicciardini maintained the same opinion held by Savonarola, and that is so decidedly expressed in the latter's sermons. Machiavelli, who still more explicitly charges Savonarola with the authorship of this law, also says: "After the year 1494, when the government of Florence had been reconstituted by the aid of Frà Girolamo Savonarola, whose writings demonstrated the learning, wisdom, and goodness of his mind: and when, among other institutions to insure the safety of the citizens, he had caused a law to be passed, for making appeal to the people against all condemnations for political

This law may indeed be considered the first step and first victory of the party whose aim it was to destroy the Republic. We shall presently witness the untiring efforts of this faction to compass the Friar's downfall, and its readiness to resort to arts of dissimulation and double-dealing with a refinement of political skill surpassing that of the best diplomatists of our own times. It is true that Savonarola made no spoken protest after the law was once carried; for it would have been useless to excite dissensions and rancour between the Signory and the people. It may also be, that neither he nor others could then foresee the sinister and dangerous consequences of this intemperate enactment of a law, that, after all, was based on a just principle inculcated by himself. Yet none of the evils to be feared in the future was so great as the patent evil that had just been accomplished; when, at the very moment that by the will of the people a general peace and amnesty was declared, the enemies of the new government banded together to effect the ruin of the Republic by which they had been so magnanimously treated. Certainly, great exasperation was felt that day, and Savonarola's frank sincerity must have been singularly chafed by the spectacle of all this ingratitude and craft. For although maintaining strict silence at the time, the sermons he gave shortly after were marked by an unprecedented irritation and violence of tone. So true is the old saying that: *One drop of vinegar spoils a whole cask of honey!*

The passing of this law of appeal against the sentences

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offences pronounced by the Eight and the Signory; the which law after long persuasion, and with the greatest difficulty, he successfully carried, &c." ("Discorsi," bk. i. chap. 95). This opinion of Machiavelli, and other writers of his time became very widely diffused, for although totally contradicted by documentary evidence, the leading part played by Savonarola in the formation of the new government caused people to regard him as the author of all the new laws passed, including those that he disapproved.

of the "*Six Beans*" was, however, the beginning of judicial reform, for in all his sermons Savonarola continued to insist on the due administration of justice.[1] In this, as in every other branch of public affairs, there was the greatest disorder; an indescribable confusion of laws and tribunals. This state of things had been purposely contrived by Lorenzo de' Medici, who in order to hold the life and property of the citizens at his own disposal, threw old and new laws, old and new institutions into so strange a jumble, that it was almost impossible to disentangle them. In earlier times the supreme jurisdiction in nearly all criminal and civil cases had been assigned to two foreign magistrates, the Podestà and the Captain of the People, who passed sentence on all important cases and heard appeals [2] from the decisions of petty magistrates presiding over civil tribunals in different quarters of the town. But in 1477 the office of Captain of the People [3] was abolished, and that of the Podestà near its end; and as the greater part of their functions now devolved on the Signory and the Eight, the power of these bodies became greatly increased. In the same year the tribunal of commerce, known as the *Casa della Mercatanzia*, situated next to the Palace of the Priors, also began to decline. It had been a very important institution in the Republic as the nucleus and chief meeting-place of the Florentine guilds. And no steps having been taken with regard to these tribunals, suitors scarcely knew to which to apply, and justice was very badly administered. Accordingly Savonarola urged the necessity of a general reform; recommending the creation of a *Ruota*, or tribunal of citizens who were to be wise, wealthy, and well-paid in order to ensure their incorruptibility. "But should this be too great an expense for the moment," he said, "hasten, at least, to appoint a good and competent judge of appeal;[1] and likewise see to the re-establishment of the Mercatanzia with a foreign judge, elected according to the ancient statutes."[2] The institution of the Ruota was so novel an idea for Florence, that it was only decided upon some years later,[3] but measures were instantly taken to restore the Mercatanzia to its original importance.

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[1] *Vide* the "Prediche sopra Aggeo" and the "Prediche sui Salmi."

[2] *Vide* the "Statuti Fiorentini" (3 vols.), published in 1778, and dated Friburg.

[3] Florence Archives, "Provvisioni, Registro," No. 190, sheet 5ᵗ.

On the 20th and 21st May, 1495, both Councils passed a new law to the following effect: Considering that there is nothing more important than the administration of justice, and seeing how the reputation of the *Casa della Mercatanzia* has been lowered by the confused laws introduced subsequently to the ancient statutes,[4] the Magnificent Signory and Gonfalonier are resolved to remedy the said confusion by following the example of ancient and well-digested laws, and restoring the said Casa to its former high reputation, and hereby provide and ordain:—

"That the Signory of the Mercatanzia shall elect thirty-eight sagacious citizens, aged thirty-five years, to be drawn by ballot (*squittinio*) from the members of the Greater Council; and that the thirteen having the largest number of votes, shall be appointed *Statutarii e Riformatori della Casa e Corti della Mercatanzia ed Università dei Mercatanti*, with the same authority held by the *statutarii* down to the year 1477, *i.e.*, that of changing, enlarging, and entirely reforming the statutes, which, after being approved by the Signory and their Colleges, will be fully enforced."[1]

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[1] *Vide* "Prediche sopra Aggeo," and "Prediche sui Salmi." See also the "Prediche sopra Rut e Michea," given on Sundays and other festivals during 1496, and particularly the sermon of the 3rd July.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] On the 20th April, 1498, it was decided to re-establish the office of Captain of the People, and to strengthen the authority of the Podestà. *Vide* the "Provvisioni" to that effect in the "Registro" (before quoted), No. 190, sheet 5^t. In 1502 the advice given by Savonarola was followed and the Ruota instituted.

[4] *I.e.*, the statute that was thoroughly reformed in 1393.

Thus was re-established the old and illustrious *Casa della Mercatanzia*, and the new commercial code of Florence compiled, known to merchants as "the Statute of '96."[2] This document is another proof of the revival of civic wisdom among the Florentines, and proved of great advantage to the people, the guilds, and the cause of justice.

While the machinery of the Republic was thus being rapidly brought to perfection, it became necessary for the Accoppiatori to resign their functions, which, unless reduced to mere sinecures, would inevitably clash with the duties of the new magistrates. Savonarola gave much help in overcoming the difficulty, and his friend, Messer Domenico Bonsi, was one of the first *Accoppiatori* to spontaneously resign his post. The others seemed willing to follow his example; and on the 8th and 10th of June a *provvisione* was carried giving the *Accoppiatori* "authority, power, and charge to renounce and transfer to the Greater Council every privilege and power conferred on them by the Parliament."[3] The same law established the new rules and mode of procedure to be observed in all future elections of the Signory.[4]

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[1] Florence Archives, "Provvisioni, Registro," 187, sheet 42.

[2] In the National Library of Florence, class xxix. cod. 143, there is an old copy of the "New Statute," prefaced by the above-mentioned provision.

[3] "Provvisioni, Registro" (above quoted), sheet 44^t and fol.

[4] According to this Provvisione the Signory was to be elected in the following manner: First, the Greater Council was assembled, and ninety-six electors chosen by lot; *i.e.*, twenty-four for each quarter of the town. Each of the ninety-six nominated some individual of his own quarter, and the ninety-six thus chosen were the candidates for the Signory. From those obtaining most votes (provided they had more than half of the total number) eight candidates were then selected (*i.e.*, two for each

The dismissal of the *Accoppiatori* having been thus successfully and peacefully accomplished, another very important measure had to be carried. This was for the abolition of *Parlamenti* which had brought so many disturbances, changes, and tyrannies on Florence. Now that the Greater Council could make and unmake every institution at will, Parliaments were no longer required; and henceforth there could be no object in summoning them, save for the overthrow of the Republic. Besides, if Piero de' Medici—who was known to be busily intriguing and had already gained some support from the French and among Italian potentates—were to succeed in returning to Florence, the only mode in which he could gain the suffrage of the mob would be by means of a Parliament Also, if his friends, neither few nor feeble, unluckily, should think of rousing the city in his favour, they too would infallibly resort to a *Parlamento*, which had always been found the best engine of tyranny in Florence, and the easiest means of effecting a change in the government.

Florentine historians and politicians have frequently indulged in long dissertations on the dangers of these

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quarter), and their names put into the general bag (*borsa*), that of the senior candidate, however, being placed in the little bag (*borsellino*). Then for each of the acting members of the Signory, two new names having a majority of more than half of the total number of votes, were placed in the bag *for respect*, and were considered to be *veduti*, or seen. The reason why the name of the senior member was placed in the little bag (*borsellino*) seems to have been because on him devolved the duty of being the first *Proposto*, an office alternately held by each of the Signory, sometimes for one day, and sometimes only for part of one sitting.

For the office of Gonfalonier twenty electors were drawn by lot. Each of the first ten of these elected two candidates, one as *sitting* Gonfalonier, the other as a *veduto*, or prospective Gonfalonier; then each of the second ten chose two other candidates for the offices of Gonfalonier and Notary. The twenty names thus obtained were then balloted, and the one obtaining most votes, provided these exceeded half of the total number, was elected Gonfalonier; the two coming next according to the number of their votes, took the rank, by courtesy (*per rispetto*) ot *veduti*. *Vide* the same "Provvisione."

popular assemblies and the enormities sanctioned by them;[1] but at this moment the question touched the citizens to the quick. They all knew that the banished Medici were plotting to return; they had discovered by the debates on the law of the "Six Beans" that there were enemies of liberty in their midst; therefore all minds were in a very excited state, and even Savonarola was moved to speak from the pulpit in terms which were not only unusual but most unsuited to the lips of a minister of peace.

"I have taken thought of this Parliament of thine, and I hold it to be nought but a means of destruction, wherefore it were best to be rid of it. Come forward, my people! Art thou not sole master now?—Yes!—See then that no Parliament be called, unless thou would'st lose thy government. Know, that the only purpose of Parliament is to snatch the sovereign power from the hands of the people. Keep ye this in mind, and teach it to your children. And thou people, at the stroke of the bell calling thee to Parliament, rise and draw thy sword and ask—'What would'st thou? Cannot the Council decide all things? What law would'st thou make? Hath this Council no power to make it?' And therefore I would have ye frame a provision to the effect, that the Signory, on taking office, should swear to summon no Parliament; and that should any one scheme to call a Parliament, let him that denounces that man receive thirty thousand ducats, if he be a member of the Signory; if not of it, one thousand. And if he that would summon a Parliament be of the Signory, let his head be cut off; if he be not of it, let him be proclaimed a rebel and all his goods confiscated. Likewise let all Gonfaloniers, on taking office, swear that on hearing the bell ring to Parliament, they will at once hasten to put the abodes of the Signory to the sack; and let the Gonfalonier who doth sack one of the houses of the Signory receive one-fourth of the spoil; and the remainder be distributed among his comrades. *Item*, that should the Signory seek to call a Parliament, the instant they set foot on the *ringhiera*, they shall no longer be considered the Signory, and all may cut them to pieces without sin." [1]

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[1] For example, this is what Guicciardini says of the matter in his "Discorsi," "Opere inedite," vol. ii. p. 299): "To firmly maintain this form of government, it is requisite to firmly observe the law against Parliaments, which only serve to destroy the popular life, . . . forasmuch as by terror and force of arms, they compel the people to consent to all that they propose; and make them believe that all that is done, is done by the will and pleasure of the whole population."

This was a momentary licence of speech; and it is only just to add that confiscation, pillage, and capital punishment were the usual penalties at that time for political offences. Nevertheless, in spite of the general usage, and although Piero de' Medici and his adherents were already plotting against the Republic, and already, as we shall presently see, nearing the gates of Florence, it was inexcusable for Savonarola to indulge in so virulent an outburst.

Anyhow, this sermon was delivered on the 28th of July, 1495, and by the 13th of August a law was passed to the following effect: Seeing that the reform of the present State was made to secure the liberty of this most flourishing people; and it being desired to maintain this government for ever, so that not ourselves only, but also our children may enjoy this sacred liberty, and no one dare to raise his head as a tyrant and subjugate the free citizens, also knowing that in no way can our liberty be so easily subverted and this new and good rule and government overthrown as by means of Parliaments; and finally, seeing that no circumstance could arise in which a Parliament would be necessary, inasmuch as the government is in the hands of the people, which is the true and lawful master of our City, and able to pass new laws, without need of other popular convocations, &c.—

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[1] "Prediche sui Salmi." Sermon xxvi., given on the 28th July.

The Magnificent Signory and Gonfalonier do hereby provide and ordain, that no Parliament be held in future; that henceforth the Signory shall swear never again to convoke one; and that whoever may plot to do so, shall be put to death, and 3,000 florins awarded to his denouncer.[1]

But after this burst of fury Savonarola calmly resumed his work of peace and turned his attention to the establishment of a *Monte di Pietà*. "I recommend this *Monte di Pietà* to your care, that all may come to its aid; all women especially should devote to it their every superfluity. Let all contribute, and let them give ducats not farthings.[2] He frequently preached in favour of this institution, and exhorted his female hearers, the wealthy, and all the citizens in general, to bestow their charity on the poor.

In fact, a *Monte di Pietà* was the best possible means for relieving the people's distress. In those days the

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[1] "Registro di Provvisioni" (before quoted), sheet 84^t and fol. Shortly afterwards Savonarola had the following lines inscribed in capital letters in the hall of the Greater Council. They cannot be said to possess any poetic merit—

"Se questo popolar consiglio e certo
Governo, popol, della tua cittate
Conservi, che da Dio t' è stato offerto,
In pace starai sempre e 'n libertate.
Tien, dunque l'occhio della mente aperto,
Chè molte insidie ognor ti fien parate;
E sappi che chi vuol far parlamento
Vuol torti dalle mani il reggimento."

Of which the literal translation is as follows: "O people; if thou dost preserve this popular Council, this sure Government of thy city, which God has vouchsafed to thee, in peace and in liberty shalt thou dwell for evermore. Keep open, then, thy mind's eye; for many snares will be laid for thee. And be assured that he who would call a Parliament would fain take the government from thine hands." *Vide* Varchi, "Storia Fiorentina" (Arbib edition), vol. ii. p. 202.

[2] "Prediche sopra Amos." The Sermon preached on Easter Tuesday.

Jews of Florence lent money at 32½ per cent., and with compound interest, so that a loan of 100 florins was found to increase in fifty years to the sum of 49,792,556 florins, 7 *grossi*, and 7 *denari* (and several fractions),[1] consequently they were held in the utmost detestation by the populace and many attempts had been made to check their extortions. In past years Frà Barnaba da Terni had urged from the pulpit the necessity of founding a *Monte di Pietà*, and established one at Perugia in 1462. Later Frà Bernardino da Feltre endeavoured to diffuse the system throughout Italy, and preached upon it in Florence during the reign of Lorenzo de' Medici. On the 27th March, 1473, a decree for its institution was already drawn up when a Jew contrived to corrupt the magistrates, and even Lorenzo de' Medici, with a bribe of 100,000 florins, and the scheme fell to the ground. In the days of Piero de' Medici the Minorite Friars again excited the populace against the Jews, although more prudent citizens blamed the attempt, and when Frà Bernardino resumed his propaganda in favour of the *Monte*, so many riots took place that the preacher was finally banished from Florence.[2]

Savonarola had never taken part in these idle controversies, nor uttered a word against the Jews; and when questioned on the subject by the Lucchese in May, 1493, had urged the duty of tolerance, saying that he sought not to persecute but to convert the Jews;[3] but after the liberation of the people he raised his voice in favour of the Monte di Pietà, and its establishment in Florence was solely owed to him. On the 28th December, 1495, a law was passed beginning with these words: "Blessed be he that cherisheth the poor and needy: in the day of adversity the Lord shall give him freedom." It then went on to speak of "the pestiferous gulf and gnawing worm of usury, already endured for some sixty years in Florence through that perfidious sect of the Hebrews, the foes of God." It wound up with a decree for the election of eight unsalaried citizens, who were to frame the statutes of the Monte; after which all contracts with Jewish money-lenders were to be considered void, and the said lenders were to leave the city within the space of one year.[1] By the 15th April, 1496, the statute was drawn up, and was passed by the Greater Council on the 21st. It was planned entirely to the advantage of the people: the expenses of its administration were restricted to 600 florins annually; the interest exacted from borrowers pledging their effects was to vary between 5 and 7½ per cent., the said borrowers, however, being obliged to swear not to gamble with the money received from the Monte.[2] Savonarola's object in promoting this righteous institution being solely the good of the people, he had first proposed that the officials employed at the Monte should be paid by the State and no interest taken on loans.[3] This proved to be impracticable, but the new statutes of the Monte afforded great relief to the lower classes, and rendered it needless to persecute the Jews or drive them all from Florence, as the Minorites had suggested ; for, despite the fervent zeal of Savonarola and his followers, they were never betrayed into intolerance.

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[1] This is no exaggerated calculation made by historians, but is recorded in the decree for the establishment of the *Monte di Pietà*.

[2] Parenti ("Storia di Firenze," cod. cit., sheet 141 and fol.), gives an account of these events, adding that the more cultivated classes were in favour of the Jews, and that Piero de' Medici was very foolish to second the Minorites and oppose the views of the magistrates.

[3] Letter of Savonarola, dated 18th May, 1493, published by Signor Bonzi in the "Giornale Storico degli Archivi Toscani," April—June, 1859. It is worthy of remark that in this letter Savonarola says that usury could not be permitted by the Pope, thus already formulating the opinion that no one should have a recognized authority to permit evil.

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[1] "Provvisioni, Registro" (before quoted), sheets 167–68.

[2] "Provvisioni, Registro," 188, sheet 5ᵗ, and fol. See also Passerini, "Storia degli Stabilimenti di Beneficenza," Florence, Le Monnier, 1853. The author is however mistaken in saying that Savonarola never favoured the Monte di Pietà, which was promoted by his enemies, the Minorites. This statement is not only contradicted by the unanimous verdict of the historians and biographers of Savonarola, but likewise by all the Friar's public utterances from the pulpit. Nor is Passerini quite right in his other assertion that all the Jews were driven out, since only Jew money-lenders or usurers were in question. It must, however, be allowed that nearly all the Jews in Florence belonged to that class.

[3] "Prediche sopra Amos," Sermon xxi.

Such were the laws by which the liberty of Florence was consolidated and a new constitution framed. Many others may of course be found in the records of the Provisions passed during these years, but being of no general importance we have left them aside. One of them, however, dated June, 1495, is deserving of mention. It runs thus: The Magnificent Signory and Gonfalonier, "considering that Messer Dante Alighieri, great-grandson of Dante the poet, cannot return to the city, owing to his inability to pay the tax levied on him by the Signory in November and December last; and deeming it were well to give some proof of gratitude to the descendants of the poet, who is so great an ornament to this city ; do hereby provide that the said Messer Dante be held exempt from every fine or penalty, &c." [1] This was a tardy proof of pardon to the memory of the great Ghibelline, a very slight act of justice to the name of the "divine poet;" yet such as it was, it is a title of honour to the new-born Republic.

Thus, in the space of one year, the liberty of Florence was established, the people authorized to carry arms, the system of taxation revised, usury extinguished by the Monte di Pietà, a general peace made, justice re-organized, *Parlamenti* were abolished for ever, and the Greater

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[1] It was discussed by the Signory on the 3rd June, approved by the Eighty on the 8th, and passed by the Greater Council on the 10th. "Registro di Provvisioni," 187, sheets 49^t–50. It had been previously debated by the Signory, the 31st December, 1494. These documents have been made public by Professor Del Lungo in his work "Del 'Esilio di Dante," Florence, Succ Le Monnier, 1881, pp. 180-181.

Council was constituted, to which the Florentines showed a tenacious attachment, such as they never accorded to any other of their political institutions. It was then that Donatello's noble group of Judith and Holifernes was placed on the platform (*ringhiera*) in front of the palace as a symbol to the people of the triumph of freedom over tyranny, and with the following inscription: *Exemplum sal: pub: cives posuere*, MCCCCXCV.[1]

And all this had been accomplished in a short time, without a sword being drawn, a drop of blood spilt, without any internal dissensions; and this in Florence, the city of riots! But the crowning marvel was to see how one man, a simple Friar, swayed all Florence from the pulpit, and always swayed it for good; an example without precedent in history of the might of human utterances and the human will. This Friar made no harangues in the streets, had no seat in the Councils of the State, yet he was the soul of the whole people, and the chief author of every law of the new government.[2] In all the laws subsequent to the revolution of 1494, the influence of the democratic monk is clearly to be traced in every word and detail. They were now drawn up in Italian instead of Latin;[1] in a new form, a new style, and animated by a new spirit. They often seem the echo of Savonarola's own accents, and are frequently composed of fragments of the sermon in which he had urged their adoption. If we enter the Council Hall we find the citizens maintaining his ideas and speaking in his very words; and, on looking back at the close of this year 1495, we shall find that never before had Florence been so wisely and prudently ruled, and that the form of government then constituted was the best and most stable that in all its years of turbulent life its people had ever been able to create. Can we, then, be astonished to see that the greatest of Florentine politicians thought it worthy of examination, and could not refrain from extolling it to the skies?[2]

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[1] This statue originally belonged to the Medici, and after their expulsion was placed on the *ringhiera*, where Michael Angelo's David afterwards stood. Later it was removed to its present position under the Loggia de' Lanzi, with the same republican inscription. Some writers assert that Cellini's masterpiece of Perseus with the head of Medusa was placed beside the former work by the Medici in reply, and as a symbol, as it were, of the slaying of the Republic by tyranny restored. Some learned adulators alleged that the Medici could trace their descent from Perseus.

[2] On the 1st April, 1495, Savonarola spoke of the changes in the new government and of the principal laws ordained by himself in the following terms: "Seeing that a change of government was at hand, and considering that it might lead to much scandal and shedding of blood; . . . I decided, being thereto inspired by God, to begin to preach and exhort the people to repentance, in order that He might show mercy. And on the Feast of St. Matthew the Apostle, *i.e.*, the 21st day of September, 1494, I began, and with what strength was vouchsafed me by God, did exhort the people to confession and fasting and prayer; and whereas these things were done willingly, by the goodness of God justice was changed to mercy, and on the 11th November the State and the government were miraculously changed in your city, without bloodshed, or any other

Machiavelli, Guicciardini, and Giannotti, whose works were composed after the liberties of Florence were crushed

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scandal. Then, O people of Florence, since thou hadst to form a new government, I did summon ye all, excepting the women, to your cathedral, in the presence of the Magnificent Signory and all the other magistrates of the City; and after speaking many things concerning the good government of the city conformably with the doctrines of philosophers and the holy fathers, I instructed thee as to the natural governments of the Florentine people; and then, continuing my sermon, went on to propose four things which it behoved thee to do. Firstly, to fear God; secondly, to love the general welfare of the city, and prefer it to private interest; thirdly, to make a general reconciliation between thee and those who had ruled thee in the past; and added to this the right of appeal from the 'Six Beans!'" Sermon 29, "Sopra Giobbe." It should be noted that this sermon was delivered after the new law of appeal was passed, and that both now and on other occasions Savonarola always states that he counselled the appeal from the "Six Beans" but never the appeal to the Greater Council.

[1] In fact, all Provvisioni previous to 1494 are in Latin; those following the expulsion of the Medici began to be written in Italian. In the same way, in the second half of 1495 even the reports of speeches made at the *Pratiche* were in Italian, but later were again transcribed in the Latin tongue.

[2] *Vide* the note at the end of the chapter.

and the hopes of patriots extinguished, ransacked the whole history of Rome, Florence, and Italy, in search of the best form of government for their native city, in case of some fortunate turn of events; and they all three arrived at the conclusion that with certain modifications suited to the alteration of the times, no better form of government could be found than that of the Greater Council and the Republic of 1494. And it is truly amazing to see that even the modifications proposed by these great intellects were in harmony with the Friar's conceptions. They suggested that the post of Gonfalonier should be a permanent appointment, and Savonarola frequently advised the same before his death; they demanded a new tribunal for criminal offences, and he had propounded the same idea in his sermons; they proposed allowing freedom of discussion in the Councils, and he had urged this more constantly than anything else.

It is true that some writers endeavour to prove that Savonarola could not have originated the idea of the Greater Council, because Soderini had borrowed the scheme from Venice; nor invented the *Monte di Pietà*, because it had been previously suggested by others, and so on. But this is labour lost; Savonarola did not invent any of the institutions he persuaded Florence to adopt, and this really constituted his chief merit. Institutions are neither created nor conceived; they come into existence as the result of the times and condition of the people. He re-discovered them, as it were; and recognizing their value succeeded in persuading the nation to adopt them; and what higher meed of praise can be given to his political sagacity! [1] We repeat that Savonarola was more clear-sighted than other men, simply because his eyes were sharpened by natural good sense and earnest benevolence, and his mind was unperplexed by theories, his heart undisturbed by party spirit. He therefore deserves to be ranked among the greatest founders of republican states.

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[1] Later, when the persecutions against Savonarola began, the Republic abolished a law of the 13th of August, 1495, concerning the mode of electing and proclaiming the Signory, and stated that this law had been passed *opera et ordine fratris Ieronomi Savonarolæ.* Signor Gherardi

For, if the evidence of historical events, the written testimony of the laws we have almost literally transcribed, and the opinion of the greatest of Italian political thinkers, do not suffice to enforce our verdict, we are at a loss for fresh arguments. We are aware that many are now of opinion that Savonarola should be mainly judged in the light of a mystic and seer of strange visions. But, it should be remembered, that during the first year of his political life, all his visionary ideas were kept in the background, and although at a later period, they are too often intruded in his religious, scientific, and even political discourses, many of the greatest men of his time were guilty of the same error. Yet no one thought of denying the competence of these men in science, letters, or public affairs, because they chanced to be mystics. Why, then, should Savonarola be robbed of his fame as a statesman and held up to ridicule, when we behold a people called back to life, as it were, by his breath, and see that the government he framed is the admiration of all writers, both in old times and new? And, should the strange shadow of Savonarola the mystic obscure the reader's mind, and prevent him from forming a clear and accurate judgment of Savonarola the man, we will beg him to patiently follow this narrative, assured that on coming to a closer and more detailed view of the Friar's visions and prophecies, they will appear in a very different light from that in which other biographers have placed them.

("Nuovi Documenti," pp. 214–25) justly remarks, that this is an almost official recognition of the great share taken by Savonarola in the formation of the new government.

NOTE TO CHAPTER V.

Of the opinions professed by great Florentine politicians concerning Savonarola and the government framed by him.

Machiavelli seems originally to have felt little sympathy for Savonarola, since in one of his early letters he only alludes to him as an astute and sharp-witted monk; but this gives increased weight to the respect with which he spoke of him in riper years. For while noting what he thought to be political errors on the part of the Friar—especially concerning the law of the "Six Beans," which we have already mentioned and shall have to mention again—he makes far more frequent allusions to his learning, prudence, and goodness of soul ("Discorsi," bk. i. chap. xlv.); declares him to "be inspired with Divine goodness" ("Decennale primo"); and asserts that "so great a man should be mentioned with reverence" ("Discorsi," bk. i. chap. xi.). Then, in treating of the institutions founded by Savonarola, he is forced to acknowledge their high importance, as we see by his "Discorso" to Leo X., in which he expressly states, that the only way to re-establish the Florentine State is by opening the Greater Council. "No stable republic was ever formed without satisfying the masses. The general mass of the Florentine citizens will never be satisfied, unless the hall (of the Council) be re-opened; . . . and your Holiness may rest assured, that whoever should wish to deprive you of the State, will hasten to throw it open before thinking of anything else." It might perhaps be urged that Machiavelli shows greater heartiness in praising the laws suggested by Savonarola and the latter's enormous influence over the people, than in praising the Friar himself; this is quite true, and easily explained by the great difference between these two almost antagonistic characters—the one, all spontaneous enthusiasm and faith; the other, all analysis, doubt, and inquiry. Both were great men, but each was singularly unfitted to comprehend the other. Savonarola would have judged the ideas of the Florentine Secretary with undue severity; and the latter, much as he admired the founder of the republic of 1494, could not refrain from passing sarcasms on the monk and the prophet. In fact, the irony piercing through his praise, and the esteem and respect always tempering his blame, give us a better idea of Machiavelli's mental attitude than had his verdict on Savonarola shown more logic and coherence, As to Giannotti, the noble and generous citizen who twice witnessed the downfall of his country's freedom; twice endured exile, and sought to mitigate his grief by studying how best to reconstitute the government, in case liberty should again be restored to Florence; he cannot mention Savonarola's name without his brave *popolano* heart throbbing faster within him. His admiration for the institutions counselled by the Friar, is expressed with an ingenuous eagerness that almost moves us to tears. "He that made the Great Council," he says, "was even wiser than Giano della Bella; for the latter sought to lower the great in order to ensure the safety of the people; whereas the former sought to secure freedom to all" ("Della Repubblica Fiorentina," bk. i. p. 87, in the "Opere," vol. i., Florence, Le Monnier, 1850). The whole book is impregnated with this admiration. Wishing to reprove the abuse common to the Friars of his day of continually preaching sermons on matters of state in the palace, he is careful to add: "For although Frà Girolamo preached them, no Frà Girolamo now exists adorned with equal learning, prudence, and wisdom; therefore, none should be so presumptuous as to deem it fitting to do that which was done by one in all things superior to all other men" ("Della Repubblica Fiorentina," bk. iii. p. 233).

But to learn the real views of great statesmen concerning Savonarola, and their minute investigations of the form of government he instituted, and of his great services to liberty in Florence, it is necessary to turn to the "Opere inedite" of Francesco Guicciardini. In his "Storia d' Italia," written at a riper age and in times hostile to Savonarola, he was cautious in his expressions; but in these works composed in the privacy of his closet and never intended for publications, he becomes another man. Sometimes he seems to be trying to lighten a load too heavy for his conscience to bear, by giving vent to feelings he had long been forced to suppress from motives of personal interest. We can almost see the sumptuous mantle of the diplomat drop from his shoulders, and reveal the simple republican jerkin beneath. An eloquent hymn to liberty gushes from his soul, and he seems forced to cry it aloud to the walls of his room, after having lacked the courage to proclaim it to his fellow-citizens. In these writings, no praise is too high for Savonarola and the Greater Council promoted by him. He says, in his "Ricordi": "The affections of the Florentines are so strongly set on the liberty given to them in 1494, that no devices, nor caresses, nor tricks of the Medici, will suffice to make it forgotten. It was easy to do so once, when only a few were robbed of their liberty; but now, after the Grand Council, all are robbed of it alike" ("Ricordi," xv., xxxviii., ccclxxvi.).

And in his "Reggimento di Firenze," he continually repeats: "You owe a great debt to this Friar, who made the revolution at the right moment, and accomplished without blooodshed that which, but for him, would have cost much blood and disorder. For, but for him, you would have had first a restricted patrician government, and then an excessively democratic one; which would have led to riots and bloodshed, and possibly ended in Piero's restoration by force. He (Savonarola) alone had the wisdom to hold the reins loosely at first in order to apply the curb at the right moment" (p. 28, and *passim*). In his youthful work, the "Storia Fiorentina," Guicciardini has almost the air of a *Piagnone*. Extolling the prudence of Savonarola, his practical and political abilities, he speaks of him as the saviour of the country, in terms of such genuine eloquence, that, being unable to quote the whole passage as it stands, we refrain from reducing it to a colourless summary.

It cannot be denied that some writers of the present day have begun to speak slightingly of Savonarola; to deny his political merit, and, failing other arguments, have put him to ridicule and shown incredible flippancy in their estimate of his worth. But every modern writer of importance who has devoted serious attention to the subject has always ended by concurring in the views of the elder historians. And if we may venture to quote any political writer of our own time in the same breath with the great Italians referred to above, we would mention the name of the young Tuscan, Francesco Forti, who, but for his untimely death, would have gained well-deserved celebrity. This writer was gifted with a special intuition of all points connected with our old laws and institutions, and this is what he says of Savonarola: "The reforms accomplished by the Friar, gave Florence the only just republican government it ever possessed. In fact, all the best men in favour of a popular government in Florence down to 1530 were unanimously devoted to Savonarola's ideas. The history of all Italy in the fifteenth century can reckon few names greater than his; and the political history of the Florentine Republic perhaps none so great" (Forti, "Istituzioni Civili").

It would seem superfluous to lengthen this note by more quotations, when the facts are so plain. But it may be as well to add that Professor Cipolla's criticisms on Savonarola, in his learned paper, "Frà Girolamo Savonarola e la Costituzione Veneta" ("Archivio Veneto," April–October, 1874), do not seem particularly well founded. He quotes and reiterates charges urged against the republican constitution of Florence by Savonarola's admirer Giannotti. But he fails to observe that the latter's remarks do not apply to Savonarola's reforms in particular—for these are praised by Giannotti—but to the constitution of the Commune of Florence in general, and indeed to that of all Italian Communes, where there was never any just division of power, or legitimate check on the authority of the magistrates. Continual change of magistrates was the expedient resorted to, but this led to other evils. The Florentine Republic was always marred by these defects, which although recognized in the fifteenth century by political writers, such as Guicciardini, Machiavelli, and Giannotti, were still left unremedied. In fact, they only disappeared with the destruction of the Italian Communes and the birth of the modern state. The objections urged by Professor Cipolla against Savonarola's reforms apply with equal force to the reforms suggested by Machiavelli to Leo X. For, although the first idea of the modern state is to be found in the secretary's writings, even he proved unable, when reducing theory to practice, to cast entirely off the mediæval conception of communal government.

CHAPTER VI.

SAVONAROLA'S PROPHECIES AND PROPHETICAL WRITINGS.

WHAT, at this juncture, was the state of Savonarola's mind? From the events narrated in the preceding chapter, one might be led to interpret it very wrongly. One might naturally expect to find him if not uplifted, at least rejoiced by his success, and the great good achieved for his people. But, on the contrary, just at that time, as a glance at his sermons will show, he was plunged in the deepest depression. While ruling the whole people from his pulpit, with all hanging on his words, and the whole city obedient to his will, he could yet feel no joy. The future looked dark to his eyes, and he vainly tried to throw off his gloomy presentiments. "I am weary, O Florence, after the four years of incessant preaching, in which I have spent my strength for thee alone. Likewise am I bowed down by constant thought of the scourge I behold drawing near, and by fear lest it overwhelm thee. Wherefore I offer up unceasing prayers for thee to God."[1] And it was true that the tempting hopes and promises he had held out to Florence had always been conditional: "If ye turn not to the Lord, the joyful tidings shall become tidings of woe." And the people being so hardened in sin, the future of Italy, Florence, and the Church naturally seemed to Savonarola to be threatened with increasing danger and suffering.

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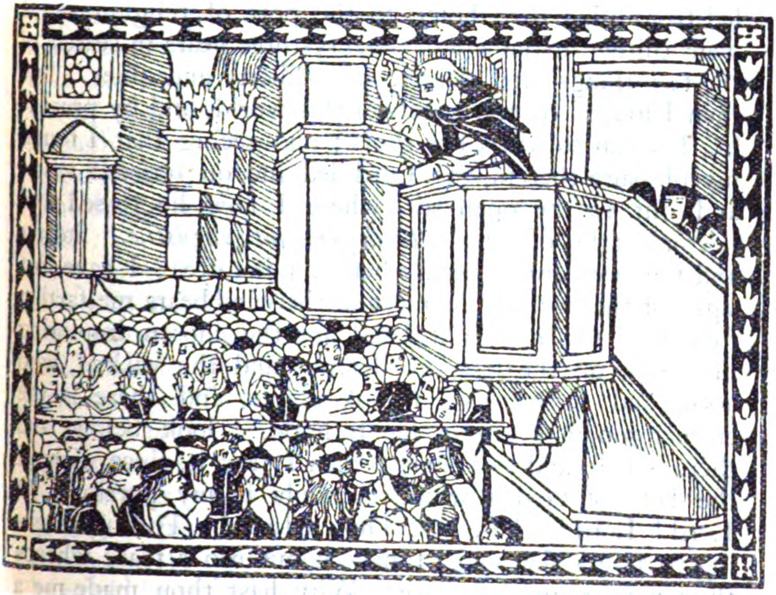
[1] Predica xxiii., "sopra Aggeo."

Thus, precisely at the time when he might have been supposed to be full of calm and content, he was most burdened by these presentiments. After the victorious result of his first political conflict; after seeing the law carried for the establishment of a popular government with a grand council; when all Florence was thronging round his pulpit in the hope of hearing some joyful outburst of thanksgiving to the Lord—he again began to preach in his former allegorical strain, describing the sad-



SAVONAROLA PREACHING.

ness weighing on his soul, and prophesying the violent death to which he had always, apparently, known himself foredoomed. "A youth," he began," left his home and went forth in a bark to fish, and, while fishing, the master of the bark steered far to sea, and out of sight of the port; whereupon the youth burst into loud lamentations. O Florence! the lamenting youth standeth here in this pulpit. I was led from mine own home to the port of religion, and I went thither at the age of twenty-three years in search of the two things most dear to me—liberty and quiet. But then I looked on the waters of this world, and by preaching I began to win a few souls; and seeing that I found my pleasure therein, the Lord led me on board a vessel and out to the open sea, where I now lie tossed and beyond sight of land. *Undique sunt angustiæ.* Storms and tempests are gathering before mine eyes; I have lost sight of the port behind me, and the wind bears me farther forward. On my right hand are the chosen, imploring my help; on the left the demons and the wicked, who assail and molest us; I look above, and there is the eternal goodness urging me to hope; I look below, and there is hell, and as a mortal man I fear it, since without the help of God it would certainly be my portion. O Lord! Lord! where hast Thou led me? Through seeking to save a few souls, I have come into a place whence there is no return to peace. Why hast thou made me a man of disturbance and discord over the whole earth? I was free, and am now the slave of all men. From all sides I behold war and discord coming upon me. Ye, at least, O my friends, ye chosen of God, for whom I travail by night and by day, have mercy on me! Let me say, in the words of the canticle: give me flowers, *quia amore langueo.* Flowers are good works, and I only yearn for ye to please God, and save your souls." And while giving this discourse he was so overcome by emotion as to be obliged to pause, saying, "Now let me rest awhile in this storm."

Presently, resuming his sermon, he cried: "What reward, O Lord, what reward shall be given in the life to come to the winner of a battle such as this? That which the eye cannot see nor the ear hear—bliss eternal. And in this life what shall be his reward? The servant may not be greater than his master, replieth the Lord. Thou knowest that after preaching to thee I was crucified; thus martyrdom shall also be thy portion. O Lord, Lord," now cried Savonarola, his powerful tones ringing through the church, "grant me then this martyrdom, and quickly let me die for Thee, even as Thou hast died for me. Behold, the sharpened blade already appears before mine eyes. . . . But the Lord sayeth unto me: wait yet a little while, so that all things may be duly fulfilled, and then thou wilt use the strength that shall be vouchsafed thee." Thereupon he broke off, resumed his exposition of the text from the Psalms, *Laudate Dominum, quia bonus*, and went on with his sermon.[1]

This was one of the moments when, as Savonarola was accustomed to say, "an inward fire consumes my bones and compels me to speak" Rapt in a species of ecstasy, he then seemed to have real revelations of the future. If he chanced to fall into this state in the solitude of his cell, he would be visited by a long series of visions, and maintain his vigil night after night, until at last, overcome by sleep, his wearied body found rest. But if he fell into this state while in the pulpit, his excitement surpassed all bounds. Words fail to describe it; he was, as it were, swept onwards by a might beyond his own, and carried his audience with him. Men and women of every age and condition, workmen, poets, and philosophers, would burst into passionate tears, while the church re-echoed with their sobs. The reporter taking notes of the sermon was obliged to write : "At this point I was overcome by weeping and could not go on." Savonarola sometimes sank exhausted in his seat, and was occasionally confined to his bed for several days after.[1] It is impossible to form any just estimate of the nature of his eloquence at moments such as these, for his words were either left unrecorded, or coldly and lifelessly rendered. But our belief in the orator's extraordinary state of excitement, in his vehement words and eloquent gestures, is all the greater when we find nothing in the written reports of his sermons to justify the tremendous effect they produced on the Florentine public, which was certainly the most cultured in Europe. We shall also find, on impartial consideration of Savonarola's life and doctrines, that his strange and inexplicable presentiment of his future fate served to endue his writings, sermons, and life with an extrordinary charm.

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[1] Predica xix., "sopra Aggeo."

When his predictions are stripped of all secondary details and accessories, we note with surprise that nearly all were fulfilled. Nor do we merely refer to the political acumen, enabling him to be the first to announce the coming of the French, the expulsion of the Medici, and many other subsequent events; although it was precisely this gift of acumen that roused the amazement of all the keenest statesmen of his age.[2] Neither need we dwell upon Savonarola's fixed presentiment of dying a violent death, and the truly marvellous and unaccountable certainty with which he so frequently announced it. The chief point to be noted is that he was the first to feel that a great regeneration of mankind was at hand; that the religious sentiment would reawake in men's hearts to achieve this regeneration, and that society would be reinvigorated by sanguinary conflict. For on close examination we shall see this to be the real gist of his well-known "Conclusions." "The church shall be renovated, but must first be scourged, and that speedily." His continual predictions of the coming conversion of all unbelievers, the triumph of Christianity upon earth, where soon there would be but one fold and one Shepherd, affords us the best proof of his belief that the human race was about to be welded into true unity, and christianity acknowledged as the sole religion of the civilized world. On attentive perusal and consideration of his works, we are positively amazed by his constant insistence on these "Conclusions," and his faith in their speedy fulfilment. And when we find him proceeding to describe the future woes of Italy in minute and strangely graphic detail; when we see how deeply his own spirit is stirred and touched, so that in speaking of these things he is seized with a species of delirious excitement—we are forced to recognize that we are in the presence of an extraordinary fact, even though it be one that admits

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[1] He mentions this himself in his "Compendium Revelationum."

[2] As we have already noted, and shall again have occasion to show, Philip de Commines felt convinced that Savonarola was a true prophet, continually mentioned him in his "Mémoires" in terms of admiration, and always repeated that—"He foretold the coming of the king, when no one else thought of it ; he afterwards wrote and told to my own ears things which no one believed, and which nevertheless were all fulfilled. No one could have suggested them to him, for they were known to none." Nardi and numerous other contemporary authorities styled and believed him a prophet ; and even Machiavelli, though certainly not one of those who best understood Savonarola and judged him with the most impartiality, never attempted to deny his gift of prophecy. He says that "of

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such a man one can only speak with reverence," and adds that infinite numbers believed in him "because his life, his doctrines, and the subjects he treated, were sufficient to inspire them with faith" ("Discorsi sulla prima Deca," bk. i. chap. xi.) Guicciardini, who, on the whole, judged him more fairly than any one else, and warmly extolled his goodness, learning and intellect, says that some of his prophecies were fulfilled; but is uncertain, notwithstanding the excommunication, whether he was to be considered a saint and a prophet. But he winds up by saying, "At all events, we have seen him to be a truly extraordinary man, who wrought the greatest good to our city" ("Storia Fiorentina," chap. xvii.). And these verdicts were pronounced after Savonarola's death and the downfall of his party.

of no explanation. Here is a man who, foreseeing the wretched future awaiting his country, has so distinct a prevision of its woes, that he already seems to suffer them in his own person.

This, it seems to us, is the view to be taken of Savonarola in his character of a prophet, when, after glancing at his entire career, and all his predictions, we concentrate our attention on such of his prophecies as are of general importance, leaving all of secondary interest aside. For if we pause to notice these, everything is changed, and we are driven to examine another side of his character. We shall then perceive that his was a dual nature, composed of two opposite individualities, and that whereas the one spurred him towards the future, the other almost chained him to the past. Having considered the first half of his nature, we must now try to arrive at some comprehension of the second.

The scholastic studies, forming so great a part of Savonarola's training, had given him an irresistible tendency to the subtleties of the sophists. And his early application to Thomas Aquinas had inspired him with a strange ardour for all the Father's utterances concerning the angelic operations, and the nature and visions of the prophets; he had strenuously pored over the minute and hair-splitting distinctions drawn by the "angelic doctor," and made at the same time so close a study of the Old Testament and Revelations, as to be thoroughly acquainted with every dream or vision of the prophets and patriarchs. These things had absorbed his youthful mind for days at a stretch, inflamed his already over-heated fancy, and excited and shaken his sensitive nerves to an indescribable degree. He had seen spectral apparitions even as a child; they were now multiplied, haunted him even in public by day, and became almost threatening by night. On finding, in after years, that by study of the Bible and the Fathers, by fervent prayer and prolonged vigils, these ghostly visions were increased, he began to believe them inspirations from Heaven, mental pictures shown to him by the angels even as the visions of the prophets described in St. Thomas. From that time he let no dream or phantasy pass without seeking some parallel case in the Bible, and scrutinizing it by the rules of the "angelic doctor." He spent whole nights kneeling in his cell, a prey to these visions, until, his strength exhausted, his brain more and more inflamed, he ended by perceiving in all things some revelation from the Lord.

It should also be remembered that Ficino's Platonic philosophy was then much diffused in Florence, and that its continual reference to spirits, angels, and visions undoubtedly exercised great influence on the Friar's mind. And there was another circumstance that should be specially noted. Among the brethren of St. Mark's was a certain Silvestro Maruffi, who played a great part in Savonarola's life. In consequence of some disease contracted in infancy, this man was subject, even by day, to attacks of somnambulism, during which he saw curious visions and uttered strange words. But, evidently, he did not attribute these manifestations to any mysterious or supernatural agency, for on learning that Savonarola was beginning to speak of Divine revelations and predict the future, he sternly reproved him, saying that this was mere folly unworthy of a man of his gravity. Thereupon Savonarola, with the earnestness of look and tone that gained so much ascendency over men's minds, counselled him to address fervent supplications to the Lord for enlightenment as to the truth in this matter. Maruffi himself, when at the point of death, and with no courage left to defend his master, distinctly confessed that, "Whether from bodily ailments or other causes, it certainly appeared to me that I was then rebuked by the spirits for mine unbelief."[1] Doubtless, this was only another of his strange hallucinations; but it produced so great an effect on both the monks, that they never again doubted, even for a moment, that these visions and revelations did not come directly from the Lord. Savonarola began to regard Maruffi with an almost reverential esteem totally unmerited by that weak and frivolous man.[2] His blind faith in Silvestro's hysteric utterances involved him in a maze of error and confirmed his strange belief in the truth of his own visions. Temperament, chance, study and prayer, all combined to urge him forward, irresistibly as it were, on the perilous path.

In fact, Savonarola's self-delusion on this point passes description. He was a slave to these so-called visions, and, indeed, often spoke of them as though they were the most important part of his divinely appointed task.

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[1] This fact is clearly proved by the documents of Savonarola's second and third trials, and of the trials of Frà Silvestro and Frà Domenico, all of which were discovered by us in the Florentine libraries. These documents are included in the Appendix to vol. ii. of the Italian edition of this work. Frà Silvestro describes his visions, distinctly avows that physicians declared them to be caused by disease, and adds, that when by reason of another illness eight pounds of blood were drawn from him his visions suddenly diminished. The records of Frà Domenico's trial confirm all that Frà Silvestro said on the subject, together with the depositions of the other prisoners, which we have also included among the documents.

[2] The reports of the above-mentioned trials give the best evidence of the truth of this assertion. Frà Domenico stated in his confession that he and Savonarola put so much faith in Maruffi's words, that on one or two occasions they gave out, as if seen by themselves, certain visions which Maruffi declared to have been shown him by the angels on purpose that he might describe them to his two friends, who were likewise commanded to proclaim them to the people as though seen by themselves. And, although on the brink of death, Frà Domenico tries to prove that this was not only a justifiable fraud, but a positive duty, inasmuch as it was imposed by the angels. All these particulars are given in Frà Domenico's holograph confession, a most important document, first discovered by us in the Codex 2053 of the Riccardi Library, and afterwards in other MSS. It affords a luminous proof of the heroic firmness of Frà Domenico, for, while openly confessing his own and Savonarola's superstition, his words place the sincerity of both beyond doubt.

He made them the object of continual study and profound meditation, devoting much time to defining the angelic method of revealing visions to mortals, enabling them to hear supernatural voices, and so on. Some of his theories on the subject are to be found scattered through his sermons, epistles, and other writings; but in his "Dialogo della verità profetica," published in 1497, he has put them all together, almost in the shape of a scientific treatise. This composition is an indubitable proof of the Friar's innocent credulity and the confusion of ideas in his brain. It is impossible to discover what was his precise view of his own prophecies and prophetic mission; he seems to have bewildered himself with conflicting theories, and been unable to decide to which to cling. Sometimes his prophecies of the future appear dictated by a simple process of reasoning, and as though he considered that study of the Bible and of the corruption of the Church must convince all wise men that chastisement was at hand.[1] But at other times he evidently believed his knowledge of the future to be derived from celestial visions expressly vouchsafed to him by God for the benefit of the Italian people. According to him this gift of prophecy was quite independent of his merits as a good Christian. A prophet, as such, is a mere tool in the hands of God, and may even be unfit to save his own soul. It was on the strength of this theory, deduced from the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas, that he claimed to be a prophet, and attributed to his visions the same explanations and same importance accorded by the "angelic doctor" and the Church to those of the prophets of old. "These visions come directly from God," he said, "and are impressed by the angels on the intellect and not on the heart; hence it does not follow that their recipient is assured of salvation."[1]

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[1] In chap. v. of Pico's "Vita Fr. H. Savonarolæ," entitled "De divinis citra velamen revelationibus, quarum particeps factus Hieronymus, futuras predixit clades," this author clearly shows that Savonarola deduced his "Conclusions" from the evidence of the Scriptures. For in all his works the Friar makes continual allusion to the ***natural reasons*** enabling him to foretell future events, and frequently styles prophecy a part of wisdom: "Inter alias partes prudentiæ tres principales ponuntur, videlicet: memoria præteritorum, intelligentia præsentium, et previdentia futurorum." *Vide* "Expositio Abachuch prophetæ," an unpublished work of Savonarola, written in his own hand on sheets added to the Bible containing his marginal notes, preserved in the National Library. An old copy of this composition is to be found in the Marcian Library at Venice.

But in other parts of his works we suddenly come upon an almost opposite theory, which, leaving puerile dreams and visions aside, no longer attributes to Divine inspiration apart from Divine favour or assurance of salvation, the marvellous instinct, or divination of the future that he undoubtedly possessed, but asserts it to be a result, and almost an essential element of the evangelic spirit with which every Christian must be imbued. "I am neither a prophet, nor the son of a prophet," he says at these moments; "I would not assume so terrible a name; but I am certain that the things announced by me will be fulfilled, for they are derived from Christian learning and the evangelic spirit of charity.[2] . . . Truly your sins, the sins of Italy, make me a prophet perforce, and should make all of ye prophets. Heaven and earth prophesy against ye, and ye neither see nor hear. Ye are inwardly blind, ye deafen your ears to the voice of the Lord calling unto ye. Had ye the spirit of charity, all would see, even as I see, the scourge that draweth near."[3] These different theories clash against each other at every step in

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[1] *Vide* "Compendium Revelationum;" "Dialogo della verità profetica;" "Predica del 27 Marzo, 1496" (among those upon Amos); "Prediche sopra Giobbe."

[2] "Prediche sopra Amos e Zaccaria," Violi's collection, sheet 40 and *passim*: Florence, 1497.

[3] "Epistola a certe divote persone," ec., given in vol. ii. of Quétif's work, p. 181; "Prediche sopra l'Esodo" (Florence, 1498), sheet 12; "Prediche sopra Amos e Zaccaria," sheet 39.

Savonarola's works, without either being absolutely predominant. Similar contradictions are frequent in the sermons, but are still more abundant and more forcibly expressed in the works specially devoted to the subject of prophecy. And for a due comprehension of this remarkable side of Frà Girolamo's mind and character these must be carefully examined.[1]

In the "Dialogo della verità profetica," to which we have before referred, Savonarola is supposed to carry on a discussion with seven allegorical speakers representing the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, and to refute their various objections. They first ask him—Whether he ever feigns to be a prophet the better to convince the people of the truths of religion. To this Savonarola indignantly replies, That there is but one truth, and that every falsehood is a sin ; and that the greatest sin of all would be to deceive a whole people in the name of the Lord, and thus make God Himself an impostor. Might not all this, asks another of the seven, be some arrogance of thine, hidden beneath the garb of false humility? Thereupon, quoting the authority of St. Thomas, Savonarola replies: Man is not justified of this light; what foundation, therefore, could I have for my pride and arrogance? May it not be, adds a third, that in all good faith thou dost deceive thyself? No, that is not possible. I know the purity of my intentions; I have sincerely adored the Lord; I try to follow in His footsteps; I have passed my nights in prayer and watching ; I have renounced my peace ; I have consumed health and strength for the good of my neighbour. No, it is not possible that God should have deceived me. This light is truth itself; this light is the aid of my reason, the support of my charity."[1] And then, with much eloquence, he proceeds to expound a theory totally opposed to that which he had proposed a few pages back. To one interlocutor he proves the truth of his *light*, by saying that it is independent of grace ; and then tries to prove it to another by asserting that light is almost identical with grace.

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[1] Herr Rudelbach deserves praise as the first writer to note the opposition between Savonarola's principal theories on prophecy. His remarks are based on a diligent examination of the author's works; but, as usual, he arrives at the most arbitrary conclusions. *Vide* the long chapter entitled "Uber die prophetische gabe, und die Prophezeihungen Savonarolas." After justly noting the difference between the two conceptions, he tries to refute the first and exaggerate the second in order to prove that Savonarola was an *evangelical* prophet, or prophet of the Reformation. He places him in the same category as Abate Gioacchino, St. Bridget, and St. Catherine, who, in his opinion, were all more or less prophets of the Reformation.

Herr Meier, on the other hand, while also seeking to prove that Savonarola was a Protestant, tries to tone down Rudelbach's exaggerations, and confesses that the latter was too prone to let his fancy run away with him. He, too, notes the contradiction between Savonarola's two theories; but while destroying one of them, he tries to keep the other out of sight, and seems almost persuaded that the Friar neither was nor believed himself a prophet, but merely tried to divine the future by the light of the Scriptures. This biographer does not appear to keep his own aim very distinctly in view, and treats the subject so coldly and vaguely, that, instead of satisfying or convincing, he only wearies his readers. Nevertheless honour is justly due to these two German writers as the first to study the prophetic works of Savonarola, and appreciate the necessity of treating the subject at length, instead of eluding it, as so many other biographers of the Friar had done.

Some years later Professor Döllinger published a paper on Christian Prophecy, in Riehl's "Historisches Taschenbuch" (Leipsic, 1871). He concurs in our own views with reference to Savonarola, saying, "Aber mehr und mehr wird doch erkannt werden dass dieser ausserordentlicher Mann, wie es der beste seiner Biographen, Villari, ausgesprochen, wirklich eine irgenthümliche Gabe der Divination bessessen habe." *Vide* p. 354

But the most noteworthy point of this dialogue is the reply made to the demand : What certainty hast thou of the truth of these revelations of thine? It is curious to see how he then flounders among a thousand arguments and syllogisms, which are the merest sophistry. He was in the unfortunate position of one trying to prove by reason that he was above reason, and demonstrating by human arguments that he was above humanity. Unconsciously to himself, Savonarola was treading dangerous ground on the verge of an abyss. His supernatural powers could only be proved in one way—*i.e.*, by a miracle. And at any moment a miracle might be required of him by the multitude, whose blind credulity was impelling him to ever wilder extremes; and such a request would inevitably prove a most powerful weapon in the hands of his adversaries. But his beliefs were so fixed, that it never occurred to him to waver in them; to do so would have seemed an act of ingratitude to the Almighty. Nor could he ever admit that those who refused to share them might be sincere in their incredulity. Savonarola also wrote another pamphlet on the subject of prophecy, entitled "Compendium Revelationum," which was published in August, 1495.[1] This contains a compendium of his principal visions, and many highly interesting details of his life, some of which refer precisely to the time and manner of his first prophecies, and record how he combated the impulse to narrate his visions, and then finally yielded to it. Savonarola has written this composition in unusually correct and even almost elegant Latin; and the visions described in it have a certain imaginative force, like those mentioned in a previous chapter, concerning the Sword of God menacing the earth; the black cross rising to heaven from the centre of Rome, amid flashes of lightning, thunderbolts, and storms, and the cross of gold rising from Jerusalem, and shedding light and consolation over the earth. As their meaning was clear, and the hopes symbolized in them were easily understood, these visions became popular, and were reproduced in numerous medals and illustrations to the Friar's works. But what can be said of Savonarola's subsequent phantasies, when, in the character of Christ's appointed messenger to the Florentines, he narrates, in minute detail, his long and strangely incomprehensible journey to Paradise, reporting the speeches there addressed to him by various allegorical personages, including the Virgin herself, and even describing the Madonna's throne and the exact number and quality of the precious stones with which it is set? This mysterious journey concludes with a sermon from Jesus Christ to the Florentines, transmitted through Savonarola's lips, and confirmatory of all that he taught. He first related this vision in a sermon given in May, 1495, and it apparently excited much adverse criticism; for in a letter addressed *ad amicum deficientem*,[1] Savonarola complains of his critics, declaring them to have been inspired by malignity: "for, had they listened attentively, they would have understood that I did not intend to say that my mortal body had been in Paradise, but only that I had seen it in a mental vision. Assuredly in Paradise there be neither trees, nor waters, nor stairs, nor doors, nor chairs; therefore, but for their ill-will, these men might have easily understood that all these scenes were formed in my mind by angelic intervention." We leave the reader to judge whether these fantastic dreams were produced by angelic intervention or by the preacher's excited fancy!

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[1] "De veritate prophetica, Dialogus in lib. viii." (without date). Another edition, dated Florence, 1497, is entitled, "De veritate prophetica libri seu dialogi ix." The alteration in the number of the dialogues is caused by one of the editors having included the introduction. A third edition was brought out in Italian during the same year, 1497, and a reprint of the work was produced in Venice in 1548.

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[1] "Compendium Revelationum." Impressit Florentiæ ser Franc Bonaccorsio, 1495; v nonas mensis octobris. The same printer had published an Italian version on the 18th of August, 1495, which was reprinted twelve days afterwards by ser Lorenzo Morgianni. In 1496 it was republished both in Paris and Florence; at Venice in 1537, and again in Paris, under Quétif's direction, in 1674.

Besides Savonarola's own writings on prophecy, we may refer to many tractates on the same subject written by his disciples. *Vide* Girolamo Benivieni, "Lettera a Clemente vii.," published by Comm. G. Milanesi at the close of Varchi's "Storie" (Florence: Le Monnier, 1857–58); Domenico Benivieni, various "Epistole" and "Trattati," giving expositions of his Master's doctrines; Lorenzo Violi, "Giornate" (among the MSS. of the Magliabecchi collection); Frà Benedetto, the Florentine, in nearly all his works (to which further reference will be made elsewhere), and especially in the "Secunda parte delle profezie di Frà Girolamo"; and finally, leaving aside many minor writers, G. F. Pico and all the elder biographers, by whom the subject is treated at length.

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[1] Quétif, tom. ii. p. 209.

Nevertheless the puerility of these visions is a strong proof of Savonarola's sincerity, and helps to rebut the numerous charges of fraud and bad faith urged by those who would have us believe that he merely fostered the credulity of the mob, in order to augment his own influence. Were we to accept this view of the man, it would be impossible to form any judgment of his character; for his whole life would be then reduced to chaos, and not only his best qualities, but his worst errors be alike inexplicable. How could it be credited that a man of Savonarola's genius, wisdom, and experience would indulge in so clumsy and childish a fraud? Had he been a wilful deceiver, would he have exposed his own fictions and bared his weaknesses to all the winds of heaven? If his sole purpose was to beguile the people, why should he have written abstruse and difficult treatises on his visions, described them to his friends and his mother, or made them the theme of marginal notes in his Bibles?[1] All that his warmest admirers would be most willing to conceal; things which the clumsiest impostor might indeed have narrated to the people, but would have never allowed to be printed, are precisely what he published, republished, and enforced by quotations from Scripture and St. Thomas Aquinas. Indeed the strangest side of his character and most noteworthy point of his career lies in the fact that the ruler of an entire people, who filled the world with his eloquence, who was one of the most original philosophers of his age, and who had given Florence the best form of republican government it had ever possessed, should almost boast of hearing voices in the air, of seeing the sword of the Almighty, of being the ambassador of Florence to the Virgin! It behoves the historian to deal plainly with this fact, showing it in its true light and true proportions, for it may thus afford the philosopher a lofty theme of meditation. It is undoubtedly a solemn thing to see how inexorably Providence humbles even the greatest men, and reminds us that they were mere mortals, by counterbalancing their highest faculties by utterly human weaknesses.

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[1] In fact, he expresses the same views as to the importance of his prophecies in many holograph notes written in his Bibles for his private use; and in letters to his mother, brothers, and friends, constantly maintains the same principles, feelings, and contradictions.

This singular contrast was very marked in Savonarola; but still more so in the age that he inaugurated. It seemed as though in that rejuvenescence of the human race, men's faculties were strained to a higher pitch, and as though life were almost a fever, in which none could escape delirium. We have seen how the grave Marsilio Ficino daily changed the jewels in his rings, according to the mood of the moment; how he also alternated his amulets, composed of the claws and teeth of various animals, and gave lectures from the professorial chair on the occult virtues contained in them. We have told how Francesco Guicciardini declared himself *to have had experience of aërial spirits*, and how Cristoforo Landino drew the horoscope of the Christian religion. Hence it may be concluded that the only difference between Savonarola and his most celebrated contemporaries was that he ascribed to religious and supernatural agencies the same phenomena which other philosophers and thinkers attributed to occult powers. But at the next step in this period of the Renaissance, our wonder passes all bounds.

The dreams of Pomponaccio, Porta, and Cardano are far wilder than those of Savonarola. The daring spirits whose researches in the occult sciences hewed out a path for Galileo apparently lived in a state of continual delirium. No one at this day could credit Cardano's faith in dreams and superstitions but for the evidence of his autobiography, and on reading his account of these things, all belief in his intellect would vanish but for the real discoveries recorded in his works. Instead of devoting his whole life to science, he wasted half his time in visionary imaginations. If he had a singing in the ears, it was the voice of his familiar spirit; the sight of a wasp flying into his room inspired almost a volume of predictions, in which he had so firm a belief, that, according to some writers, he positively starved himself to death, in order that one of them might be fulfilled.[1]

These were the men, these the times destined to furnish so many martyrs to science! And, we must again repeat, that unless we place Savonarola at the head of this new epoch, it will be impossible to comprehend his character. In announcing his prophecies from the pulpit, he saw the future so clearly before him, that he seemed already across the threshold of the new century; he was so strongly imbued with its spirit, that he may be said to be its initiator. But whenever he tried to reason upon and explain the marvellous gift that was solely derived from his own greatness of soul, he fell back into the past, and, lost in the mazes of scholasticism, could not even comprehend himself. In him, therefore, as in his age as a whole, we behold the past and future in mortal conflict. The past seems still firmly established, but it is withered at the root and losing its grasp of reality, while the future is sending forth vigorous young shoots, and claiming the world as its own.

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[1] This statement is made by De Thou. *Vide* Libri, "Histoire des sciences mathematiques;" Cardani, "De vita propria." As to Porta, the reader may refer to Libri's account of him, and also to his own work upon "Magia." See also Carriere's "Die philosophisce Weltanschauung der Reformationszeit" (Stuttgart, 1847); and Ritter's "Geschichte der Philosophie."

CHAPTER VII.

VARIOUS FACTIONS ARE FORMED IN FLORENCE. SAVONAROLA TAKES HIS TEXTS FROM THE PSALMS ON FEAST DAYS; AND IN LENT, BY MEANS OF SERMONS ON JOB, INAUGURATES A GENERAL REFORMATION OF MANNERS WITH SIGNAL SUCCESS. CONVERSION OF FRÀ BENEDETTO.

(1495.)

RESUMING the thread of our history, we must now go back to the beginning of 1495, in order to trace the germs of civil discord, which, although as yet hidden from the eye, were soon to be developed and again divide Florence into factions. At this moment all seemed to be of one opinion, and of one party—*i.e.*, that of the Friar and the *Frateschi*. But on closer view it might have been discerned that there was considerable variety of opinion among the citizens. First of all there were some who, while devoted to popular government, had no sympathy for friars in general, nor for Savonarola in particular. These men were few, and disunited; they saw that the Friar's conduct of public affairs was favourable to the cause of liberty; and accordingly they always gave him and his followers the support of their votes in the Council Chamber. In consequence of their inoffensive attitude they were entitled the Whites (*Bianchi*), whereas a larger, more compact and far more dangerous body of citizens bore the name of the Greys (*Bigi*). The latter consisted of Medicean adherents, who, owing their pardon to Savonarola, had apparently joined him and declared themselves in favour of the popular government. But in reality they were engaged in secret intrigues and correspondence with Piero de' Medici, whose return they ardently desired. And although it was not long before these schemes came to light, they were carefully concealed at first, and the Republic was long unaware of the treachery lurking in its midst. It was precisely the secrecy of their labours that rendered the Greys so dangerous, for Savonarola's magnanimous behaviour to them, and the over-trustfulness of his followers, increased their facilities for ruining the State. The honest inhabitants of Florence, burning with enthusiasm for the Friar's doctrines, and fully satisfied with the general amnesty and the liberty granted to them, had no idea what sinister schemes and intrigues were in progress; and when Savonarola warned them from the pulpit to be on the alert, "since there be some that strive against liberty, and seek to play the tyrant," they were inclined to think that his zeal for the public good betrayed him into exaggeration, and went about declaring that the Medici had no longer any adherents in Florence.

Meanwhile the popular party kept a strict watch on other and more undisguised adversaries, *i.e.*, the partisans of a limited government, who, as we have seen, had been from the first most energetic opponents of the new *régime*. These were men of wealth and experience whom the Medici had often, though reluctantly, employed in State affairs; they had weighty influence at the Roman Court, and were still more powerful in Milan, where Ludovico the Moor, who was equally hostile to Piero de' Medici and the Republic, gave them the utmost encouragement. The aim of these men was to grasp the government in their own hands and found a species of aristocratic republic as in the days of the Albizzi. Consequently they felt a fierce hatred for the Mediceans, and instead of pardoning them as Savonarola had done, would have crushed them by exile, confiscation, and death; they detested all friends of the popular government, but were specially virulent against the Friar as the main cause of their defeat, and against his followers whom they sneeringly called *Piagnoni* (Snivellers). Hence their title of *Arrabbiati* (The Maddened).[1] They had, in fact, all the old, restless party spirit, seemingly indigenous to Florence, that Savonarola alone could hold in check, and this was why they so bitterly hated him. They were ready for any risk, and eager to make some daring attempt, but were still too weak a minority. For after the establishment of the new constitution, the Arrabbiati were in a very difficult position: they could make no assault on the popular government without being opposed by the Bianchi and Piagnoni, and still more decidedly by the Bigi, who well knew that under a government formed of Arrabbiati[2] they would be hopelessly excluded from pardon. In this state of things even the Arrabbiati saw fit to feign friendliness, or at least tolerance, to the popular government, while concentrating all their hatred upon Savonarola, who was plainly its leading spirit and mainstay. Therefore they persistently jeered at his visions and prophecies, declared that no friar had any call to meddle with politics, and that his charges against the Court of Rome were monstrous scandals. By this means they hoped to alienate the Bianchi and Bigi from Savonarola and his followers, and by attacking him as an individual to find a way of overthrowing his party.[1]

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[1] In after years, *i.e.*, during the siege of Florence (1529–30), these names had a different meaning. Both *Piagnoni* and *Arrabbiati* then signified adherents of the popular government, and the latter name was more specially applied to the hottest champions of the popular cause.

[2] "And all well disposed to the universal government, desired that it should be introduced and favoured by the Friar. In the which the friends of the past Medicean rule very willingly concurred, in order to escape the vengeance of their adversaries; inasmuch as they would have been exposed to much greater danger from them under the government of a particular (restricted) State, if by ill fortune of our city a new restricted government should have been established" (Nardi, "Istorie di Firenze," vol. i. p. 66). See, too, Violi, "Giornate;" and Parenti, "Storie." It would be a great blunder to infer from this that any real friendship ever existed between Savonarola and the Medicean party.

Accordingly they began hostilities in the early part of 1495; and when the Twenty Accoppiatori, after hot dispute, elected as Gonfalonier Messer Filippo Corbizzi, a man without administrative ability, indifferent to the people, and decidedly adverse to Savonarola,[2] the Arrabbiati gathered about him and found him a useful instrument for their designs. One day he adopted the very unusual measure of assembling in the Palace a council of theologians and ecclesiastics, including Frà Domenico da Ponzo, a noted enemy of the Friar. Marsilio Ficino was also of the number, for although already an admirer of Savonarola's doctrines, he still belonged to the Medicean party.[3]

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[1] Nardi, vol. i. pp. 64 and 88. See also Violi.

[2] Nardi, vol. i. p. 82; Ammirato, "Storia di Firenze," bk. xxvi.

[3] "Vita Latina," sheet 18^{t}; Burlamacchi, 69 and fol. Regarding Savonarola and his predictions Ficino expressed himself as follows: "Nonne, propter multa delicta, postremum huic urbi, hoc autumno (September and October, 1494), exitium imminebat, nullâ prorsus hominum virtute vitandum? Nonne divina clementia, Florentinis indulgentissima, integro ante hunc autumnum quadriennio, nobis istud pronuntiavit per virum sanctimonia sapientiaque præstantem Hieronymum ex ordine prædicatorum, *divinitus* ad hoc electum? Nonne *præsagiis monitisque divinis* per hunc impletis, certissimum iam iam supra nostrum caput imminens exitium nulla prorsus virtute nostra, sed præter spem opinionemque nostra mirabiliter vitavimus? *A Domino factum est istud, et est mirabile in oculis nostris.* Reliquum est, optime mi Johannes, ut deinceps salutaribus tanti viri consiliis obsequentes, non solum ego atque tu, sed omnes etiam Florentini Deo nobis clementissimo grati simus, et publica voce clamemus: Confirma opus hoc, Deus, quod operatus es in nobis" (Letter to Giovanni Cavalcanti, 12th December, 1494. *Vide* Marsilii Ficini, "Opera," vol. ii. p. 963. Basileæ, 1576.) But later, in the days of Savonarola's adversity, Ficino basely turned against him.

Directly the members were assembled, the Gonfalonier stated that he intended to proceed against the Friar for his interference in the affairs of the State, and caused him to be summoned. Savonarola presently appeared, accompanied by his faithful Frà Domenico of Pescia and quite unaware of the purpose of the meeting. But scarcely had he crossed the threshold than the mob of theologians began to attack him with a furious storm of invectives. The fiercest of his assailants was Tommaso da Rieti, a Dominican friar, reputed to be a skilled theologian, and who, by reason of his diminutive stature, daring temper and subtlety in argument, was nicknamed the Garofanino (spicy little clove). Taking for his text the apostle's words, *Nemo militans Deo, implicat se negotiis sæcularibus*, this man delivered a diatribe against Savonarola, who, waiting until all the others had finished speaking, then quietly rose and said in reply: "Now the Lord's words are fulfilled: *Filii matris meæ pugnaverunt contra me*; yet it saddeneth me to see that my fiercest foe is likewise clad in the robe of St. Dominic. That robe should remind him that our founder took no small part in worldly affairs; and that our order hath produced a multitude of saints and holy men who have been engaged in the affairs of the State. The Florentine Republic must surely remember Cardinal Latino, St. Peter Martyr, St. Catherine of Siena, and St. Antonine, all members of the order of St. Dominic. To be concerned with the affairs of this world in which God Himself hath placed us, is no crime in a monk, unless he should mix in them without any higher aim, and without seeking to promote the cause of religion." He therefore challenged all present to cite a single passage of the Bible forbidding men to give their support to a free government in order to ensure the triumph of morality and religion. And he said in conclusion: "Far easier will it be to find it forbidden to discuss religion in profane places, or theology in the Palace." The divines were so confounded by this address, that no one knew what to reply. One of them, however, started to his feet and cried in a fury: "Come, then, tell us plainly: are thy words truly inspired by God, or are they not?" "That which I have said was said plainly," rejoined Savonarola; "I have nothing more to add now." And thereupon this strange meeting was dissolved[1]

Having thus routed and confounded his foes, Savonarola continued his labours in the pulpit, seeking to soothe men's minds, quiet their passions, and extinguish party strife. At one time he would inculcate universal peace, at another the advantages of the Greater Council; then we find him enthusiastically comparing the different steps in the formation of the government he had instituted with the seven days of the Creation;[2] while on another occasion he compares them with the hierarchy of the angels.[3] "Carry on your reforms," was his unceasing cry; "continue in the way ye have begun, and the blessing of the Lord will be with ye." In the course of his last sermon on Haggai he announced that it was the Lord's will to give a new head to the city of Florence; and after keeping his audience long in suspense, finally declared: "This new head is Jesus Christ; He seeks to become your King!" He then dilated on the supreme felicity of having no ruler, no guide save Christ, and the overflowing prosperity that would thus be vouchsafed to all. "O Florence, then wilt thou be rich with spiritual and temporal wealth; thou wilt achieve the reformation of Rome, of Italy, and of all countries; the wings of thy greatness shall spread over the world."[4]

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[1] "Vita Latina," sheet 19; Burlamacchi, p. 69 and fol.
[2] Predica xviii., "sopra Aggeo."
[3] Predica i., "sopra i Salmi."
[4] Predica xxii., "sopra Aggeo."

With this proclamation of Jesus Christ as King of Florence, his Advent sermons on Haggai came to an end amid tremendous outbursts of popular enthusiasm. Politics and religion are so closely and strangely commingled in these discourses, that they form a true record of the times and of the diverse passions stirring the souls of the people and their Friar. He then bade his congregation farewell on the score of needing repose; but he did not allow himself much rest, for in January, 1495, we find him again in the pulpit, delivering sermons from the Psalms on the Sundays before Lent. Thus we have seven more lengthy sermons, resembling those on Haggai both in matter and form,[1] but likewise containing many indications of the civil discord, and the contest with the Arrabbiati, by which the preacher was now harassed. "O ungrateful Florence, ungrateful people! For thee have I done that which I would not do for my own brethren, in whose behalf I have ever refused to offer so much as a single prayer to any prince of this world. And now that which I have done for thee hath stirred ecclesiastics and laymen to all this hatred against me."[2]

One of these sermons on the Psalms demands special mention, namely, that delivered on the 13th of January, and known as the "Renovation Sermon." Taking for his text the celebrated words heard by him in his visions, *Ecce*

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[1] "Prediche del. Rev. P. Frate Hieronimo fatte sopra diversi Salmi e Scripture in S. M. del Fiore, cominciando il giorno dell' Epifania e seguitando gli altri giorni festivi, raccolte per ser Lorenzo Violi," Florence, 1496. As we have already stated, the first seven of this series forms a sequel to that on Haggai; the eighth, addressed to certain nuns, treats of conventual vows; then come seventeen others delivered after the Lenten series on Job. Later, Savonarola added a few more on the same theme. These sermons are all long and fill a bulky volume, with the addition of a few of Frà Domenico's discourses, to which we shall allude further on. Several of the later editions of this book are mutilated, and particularly those published at Venice in 1517 and 1543.

[2] Predica ii., "sopra i Salmi," delivered on the 11th of January, 1495 (common style).

gladius Domini super terram cito et velociter, Savonarola expounded all his own theories on the coming renovation. He began by saying that future and contingent events are known to God alone; hence astrology, which pretends to ascertain the future from the stars, is fallacious, inasmuch as it is contrary to the rules of faith and the principles of science. After refuting at length the assumptions of astrology, he proceeded to treat of the light of prophecy, "which by Divine participation reveals the future, without any special grace in the seer, even as Balaam, for instance, was a sinner though a prophet." He then explained the various ways in which the future may be revealed, and finally touched on his own visions: "They came to me," he said, "even in my earliest youth, but it was only at Brescia that I began to proclaim them. Thence was I sent by the Lord to Florence, which is the heart of Italy, in order that the reform of all Italy might begin."

After these general remarks, he spoke on the need of chastisement and renovation. He first enumerated the natural reasons for this need, namely, the oppression of the elect, the obstinacy of sinners, the desire of the righteous, and so on to the last reason—*i.e.*, the universal conviction. "Thou seest! all seem to look forward to chastisement and tribulation. Thou seest! all hold it to be just that our many iniquities should be punished." He reminded his hearers of Abate Gioacchino, "who likewise foretold renovation at this period;" he cited a great number of parables,[1] in order to prove the probability of the scourge; he drew a thousand distinctions as to the diverse nature of visions, and finally recounted those vouchsafed to himself. But his minutest descriptions were of the vision of the sword bent towards the earth, and that of the two different crosses he had seen arise from Rome and Jerusalem. It is impossible to describe the fervour with which he related these dreams, and his perfect conviction that they were heavenly revelations. He repeated the words he had heard uttered by invisible beings in heaven;[1] the solemn tones of his voice rang through the vault of the temple, were received as Divine manifestations by the spell-bound people, and thrilled them with mingled emotions of wonder, delight, and terror. In that age all men, and especially the more incredulous, revelled in supernatural visions such as these; hence there was an almost magnetic sympathy between the preacher and his audience; and it would be hard to say which dominated the other, which was the exciting force. Both were strung to a pitch of feverish exaltation, scarcely to be described, much less realized at the present day.

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[1] It was true that, according to Abate Gioacchino, the world's renovation should have been accomplished in 1260. But, the prediction not being fulfilled at that time, his followers transferred the date to a later period.

But, to prove the necessity of chastisement, Savonarola did not confine himself to arguments of this kind; on the contrary, he recapitulated his theme in order to prove it by the authority of the Scriptures. "Daniel the Prophet hath said that Antichrist shall come to persecute the Christians in Jerusalem: therefore it is necessary to convert the Turks. And how shall they be converted unless the Church be renewed? St. Matthew hath told us that the Gospel shall be preached throughout the world; but who now is fitted to preach it? Where are good pastors and preachers to be found?" Continuing in this strain, he concluded as follows: "Wherefore thou mayest see that the Scriptures and revelation, natural reason and universal consent, announce the coming of the scourge. O Italy! O princes! O prelates of the Church! the wrath of God is upon ye, neither is there any hope for ye, unless ye be converted to the Lord. O Florence! O Italy! these adversities have befallen ye for your sins. Repent ye before the sword be unsheathed, while it be yet unstained with blood; otherwise neither wisdom, power, nor force will avail. . . . Wherefore these are my last words: I have revealed all things to thee with reasons, both human and Divine; I have prayed thee, made supplications unto thee; command thee I may not, being thy father, not thy lord. Do thy part, O Florence; mine is but to pray the Lord to enlighten thine understanding."[1]

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[1] Here are some of these utterances: "Audite omnes habitatores terræ, haec dicit Dominus: Ego Dominus loquor in zelo sancto meo: ecce dies veniet et gladium meum evaginabo super vos. Convertimini ergo ad me antequam compleatur furor meus. Tunc enim, angustia superveniente, requiretis pacem et non invenietis."

This sermon was immediately printed and circulated throughout Italy, Savonarola's enemies being as active in its dissemination as his friends. It was useful to the latter as a proof of their master's eloquence and to increase the diffusion of his doctrines; to the former, as a specimen of his audacity and a means of inflaming the Pope and princes against him. And, in the hands of the Arrabbiati, it proved a valuable document with which to rouse the smouldering wrath of Alexander VI. Already, at the close of 1494, the Arrabbiati had contrived to obtain from Rome a mandate for Savonarola's removal to Lucca; and they now urged the Pope to turn a deaf ear to the Signory's request to be allowed to retain him in Florence.[2] Accordingly, more stringent orders arrived from Rome, and even the pressing solicitations of the Ten failed to reverse the decree.[3]

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[1] "Predica della Rinnovazione." It is the third sermon on the Psalms, and was also published separately. There is an undated copy of it in the Guicciardini Collection.

[2] Nardi, Pitti, Violi, and other writers repeatedly state that the first orders from Rome were sent at the suggestion of the Arrabbiati and of Ludovico, of Milan.

[3] The Signory sent a despatch on the 28th of December, 1494, to beg that Savonarola might remain in Florence: "Hoc nobis populoque nostro

Hence the Arrabbiati, having now won the Gonfalonier to their side, hoped that affairs would turn in their favour and the Friar be dismissed. Savonarola, in fact, being determined to cause no scandal, was already preparing to leave at the appointed time. Meanwhile, however, he gave four more sermons, and in the first exhorted the people to be steadfast in seeking to perfect their new government, and inculcated the duties of charity, peace, and concord. In the second he treated of simplicity and the moral life; urged his hearers to bestow their superfluities on the poor, and suggested that the convents should be the first to set the example. And should the requisite permission be obtained from Rome, St. Mark's, he added, would be one of the first to begin. "Nowhere in the Gospel have I found a text recommending golden crosses and precious stones; rather have I found: I was athirst and ye gave me not to drink; I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat. Should ye obtain the consent of Rome, I, for my own part, will give everything away, beginning with my own mantle."[1] In the two concluding sermons[2] he bade farewell to the people, saying that he must yield to the wrath of his foes. "I must go to Lucca, and thence perhaps elsewhere, as I may be ordered; pray the Lord to aid me in teaching his Word. There be many in this city who would fain make an end of me; but know that my hour hath not yet come. I depart, because it behoveth me to obey orders, and I would generate no

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universo ita gratum erit, ut nihil gratius acceptiusque ac salutarius, ets omnia gratissime expectemus, hoc tempore accidere possit." (*Vide* "Il Savonarola e i Lucchesi, nuovi documenti," Florence: Cellini, 1862.) The letter of the Ten was sent to Rome with another addressed to their ambassador, the 8th of January, 1495, containing these words: "Present it (the letter) without delay, and endeavour to obtain a Brief addressed to Frate Hieronymo, authorizing him to preach here this year, as has been already said." Meier gives this document at page 80, note 2.

[1] Predica v., "sopra i Salmi."

[2] Predica vi. (January 20th); Predica vii (January 25th).

scandal in your city. As for ye, the chosen of the Lord, be steadfast in prayer and charity; be not afeared of the scourges and tribulations which ever befall the righteous; but be ye firm in holy deeds." Having pronounced these words, he left the pulpit amid the agitation and grief of all his friends.

But although the Gonfalonier Corbizzi was adverse to the Friar, and the Signory then in power readier to help him by words than deeds, the Ten were now counted among his warmest adherents. Assured of the support of the whole people, they again wrote to Rome, urgently beseeching the Holy Father to permit Savonarola to remain in Florence as Lenten preacher, notwithstanding the orders transferring him to Lucca. The whole city was in commotion at the announcement of the Friar's departure; many regarded the popular government as already overthrown; and epistles of all kinds were despatched to Rome, praying that the order might be revoked. So far, in fact, Alexander had no serious reasons to hate Savonarola, for he knew little and cared less concerning his visions and prophecies. Besides, King Charles, the friend of the Florentines and their Friar, was now in Naples at the height of his prosperity, and the Pope was unwilling to arouse his enmity. Therefore he was easily persuaded to yield to the request of the Ten, and revoking his decree, permitted Savonarola to preach during Lent in Florence.[1]

But, although apparently of little moment in itself, this act made a powerful impression on the Friar's mind. He could never forget it, and it turned his ideas into a new channel.[1] The order to leave Florence and preach elsewhere was undoubtedly painful to him; nevertheless, regarding obedience as a sacred duty, nothing would have led him to violate the command. But what was he to think, when the Head of the Church showed so little respect for his own Briefs as to issue and recall them, at the pleasure of the last supplicant? It was now certain that the Decree had only been issued to please those enemies of the Friar who had already begun to lay all kinds of snares for him. How then could he, Savonarola, attach any weight to a command to which none was given by the Pope himself? Ought he to have obeyed it, supposing he had known all this at first? For the moment, however, Savonarola banished these thoughts as harassing temptations. He sent Frà Domenico to Lucca, and being solicited by that city to promise at least to go there in 1496, replied that, unless compelled by unforeseen events to remain in Florence, he would certainly come.[2] Meanwhile he immediately began his Lenten sermons. As if to show his need of patience, he took his texts from the Book of Job, and refrained as much as possible from touching on politics, so that his enemies might have no fresh excuse for attacking him. There was another reform to effect, no less useful and imperative than the change of government had been, namely, the *reformation of manners*; and to this his whole energy was given in his sermons on Job. These discourses, however, have come down to us in almost as mutilated a form as the series on Noah's Ark. Reported in a very incomplete and fragmentary fashion, by one who continually explains that he is too much shaken by emotion to transcribe the preacher's words, they were first rendered into Latin, then back into Italian, and first published at Venice in this shape in the year 1545.

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[1] "Concerning the which thing (namely, the Friar's departure) the majority of the citizens were greatly moved, inasmuch as all the magistrates and men of honest disposition held his sermons to be very beneficial to morals, and very necessary for the pacification of the discordant minds of ill-disposed citizens at the beginning of the new government. Wherefore by the endeavours and messages of many devoted followers, especially of the Ten of liberty and peace, a revocation of the above-mentioned Brief was sought from the Pope, and was thus easily obtained" (Nardi, vol. i. p. 65).

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[1] Savonarola afterwards alluded to these impressions in his sermons.

[2] In his letter to the Lucchese dated 18th of March, 1494 (common style, 1495), he made this reply to their request. *Vide* the before-mentioned pamphlet, "Il Savonarola e i Lucchesi."

The godly life, union, and concord of the citizens form the principal subject of these sermons. From the beginning he laid down the rule that all may be saved if they honestly endeavour to live a godly life: "Nought can excuse us, O my brethren; rectitude draws us near to the Lord, and the Gospel is the staff of our weakness."[1] In these sermons the godly life is the all in all. He treats of friendship; and after discussing its differences of degree and quality, concludes by saying that the only friendship worthy of the name, and really firm and enduring, is that which is founded upon goodness, honesty, and virtue.[2] He treats of the essence of freedom, and arrives at the same conclusion: "God is essentially free, and the just man is free after the likeness of God. The only true liberty consists in the desire for righteousness. It seemeth to thee that a good monk hath no liberty, because he hath submitted his will to that of others; but his freedom is greater than that of laymen, exactly because he willeth to do that which is commanded him by others. What liberty is there in being dominated by our own passions? Now, in our own case, dost thou, Florence, desire liberty? Citizens, would ye be free? First of all love God, love your neighbour, love one another, love the general welfare; and if ye have this love and union among ye, true liberty will be yours."[3] He continually urged the necessity of concord. "Florence! I tell thee thou must be united, if thou wouldst be freed from thy woes. For if thou sayest: oh! union is ours, thou dost lie. I repeat that if thou sayest union is thine, thou dost lie; a second and a third time, thou dost lie. . . . Wert thou united thou wouldst have already won that which I promised thee. . . . Wherefore, be ye united. If ye desire to have strength and virtue from God, let the flesh be prepared to receive them, and the preparation needed is union, the which, O Florence, thou hast not. Where is union, there is God; and where is God, there is all strength and all virtue."[1]

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[1] Predica ii., "sopra Giobbe." [2] Predica iii. [3] Predica xiv.

He continually declared these to be the commands of God and addressed by Him to the Florentines. It would seem that, while prudently abstaining from politics, he indulged more freely in visionary flights. He gave an entire sermon on the light of prophecy;[2] in another he stated that the world was divided into two hosts; *i.e.*, the host of evildoers led by the Devil, and of the virtuous led by Jesus Christ; he suggested that the chosen should make alliance with Christ, and offered to go to Him as their ambassador. Then, in subsequent sermons he recounted his dialogues with Christ and the Virgin during this strange mission, and these also chiefly turned on union and goodly living. Jesus Christ had said to him: "Behold how all natural things are gradually fused into one more perfect than the rest. Every movement of material things is subject to the movement of the heavens; every movement of our body to that of the heart; every movement of the soul to reason; all rules and governments to God, the prime ruler of the universe. Consider how, when the elements of a thing are dispersed, that thing is said to no longer exist, and only by some force reconstituting its unity can it be restored to existence. Had it been possible to display all My power and goodness in a single creature, I would have so displayed it; and only because no one creature could be capable of containing it all, have I created a multitude, which represent together a greater and vaster unity. Observe nature as a whole, and thou wilt perceive that every individual being craves unity; all creation seeks it save this Florentine people that would rather be separate and divided." In the course of the same sermon, Savonarola again touches on the theme of holy living. "Goodness" —the Lord is still supposed to be speaking—" is diffusive in its nature, wherefore I, who am supreme goodness, inform the whole created world, and have given life to all creatures; and all that is good in them is a share of My goodness. By goodness I came down among men, in the likeness of man, and was fastened on the Cross. Behold, therefore, the sign by which the good man shall be made known: namely, when one shall infuse his goodness into others, and make them share the good that is in him, verily that man is good and a sharer of My goodness. But when the contrary is seen, and men neither infuse nor spread the talent I have given to their charge, this is a manifest token that they have no share in My goodness. The Christian life consisteth not in ceremonies, but in the practice of goodness, *i.e.*, of compassion and mercy. Wherefore declare thou unto all, that thus is the goodness of man made known; namely, by seeing whether he be pitiful, whether he share that which he hath with others, and especially with the poor. And in this consisteth the Christian religion, which is founded on love and charity." [1]

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[1] Predica xiii., "sopra Giobbe."

[2] Predica xii.

Thus the chief theme of these sermons is always the reformation of manners, a more pressing need at that time than the political reform, which was in full progress. It is true that the discourses are overladen with visions, allegories, and fantastic interpretations of the Bible, rendered still more fantastic by the superstitious ignorance of their agitated and unskilled compiler. But in fact the preacher's fancies were only, as it were, the outer husk of reasonings intended to enforce holy living and union upon the citizens. Here, for instance, is an example of the moral conveyed by his visions, and by the scriptural allegories which he always interpreted on the same plan:—"It is recounted by St. Mark that early in the morning after the Sabbath day (Holy Saturday) the three Marys came to the Lord's sepulchre, with fragrant ointments to anoint the body of our Saviour. The three Marys represent the perfect, the proficient, and the incipient who are in search of Christ. As I have before told ye, regarding this Gospel, they bear aromatic and fragrant drugs—*id est*, virtues which are pleasing to Jesus. They reach the sepulchre, *orto jam sole*—*i.e.*, when the sun was already risen." . . . "If thou dost seek Jesus, the sun of justice will arise in thee, thou shalt be enlightened, and thy desire shall be fulfilled. But thou must walk in righteousness and labour, since by labour shalt thou be made perfect. Behold the three Marys! they walked in righteousness, seeking their Lord, and thou seest, they were comforted at last. And they thought to themselves by the way, Who will be able to lift the stone? Thus saying, they reached the temple, and lo, the stone was already lifted. The which signifieth, that if thou goest by the path of good life seeking the Lord, even if thou knowest Him not, He abideth in thee, and lifteth the stone of thy ignorance; and the light revealed shall say unto thee, as said the Angel unto the Marys, *Jesum quæritis Nazarenum? Surrexit, non est hic.*" "I know that ye seek Christ; He is risen, He is not here. That is to say, seek Christ in heaven; seek Him not in the things of this life, neither in the things of this world; seek Him in celestial, divine, and spiritual things; renounce the love of temporal things. He is in heaven, and lo, He awaiteth ye. O Christians! what do ye here? Seek to go where is thy head, for there shall ye be blessed. *Venite et videte*, said the Angel to the Marys; that is, come and see that Christ lieth not in the sepulchre, for He is arisen. *Sed ite*, but go, walk from virtue to virtue in the present life, if ye would find Christ in the next."[1] Thus ended the Lenten course on the Book of Job, the concluding sermon, as well as many of the others, being interrupted by the emotion of the scribe who was noting it down.[2]

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[1] Predica xvi., "sopra Giobbe."

Immediately after Lent Savonarola seemed broken down by fatigue. His old energy still flashed from his eyes, but he was terribly emaciated, looked thoroughly worn out, and was increasingly weakened by an intestinal complaint. The incessant struggle and over-excitement of the last few years were too great a strain to be long endured by any mortal constitution; and political life had tried his strength more than he was himself aware. The direction of the revolution and reform of the State had not only cost him ceaseless thought, speech, and counsel; but had also loaded him with the immense responsibility of practically deciding the destinies of a nation whose sole trust was in him. He had felt the necessity of preserving his moral ascendency, of animating, as it were, the whole multitude with his own spirit, ruling it by his own will, and had therefore lived in a perpetual state of tension and feverish excitement. Yet so great was this Friar's earnestness, that when the political strife had abated, instead of taking any rest, he immediately began another reform of equal magnitude by means of his sermons on Job. And into this, as into all his other undertakings, he had thrown his whole strength, with an indescribable devotion and tenacity of purpose. The words in themselves are probably the least part of these sermons;

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[1] Predica xlv., "sopra Giobbe."

[2] "So greatly was I overcome by emotion and tears, that I could not go on writing." The amanuensis subjoined this note to many of these sermons, including the last.

at all events in the incomplete form in which they have reached us. The subject treated in them was the one dearest to the Friar's heart; his mental excitement was increased by physical weakness, and his words were emphasized by fiery glances and energetic gesticulations. And although he gave too much importance to the visions of his brain, so great was the force of his sincerity, goodness, and benevolence as to have unprecedented effect upon his hearers. Never was a multitude so entirely dominated by pious emotion, so easily plunged in tears! By the end of Lent, Savonarola had won almost a greater victory than the political triumph achieved by his sermons on Haggai.

The aspect of the city was completely changed. The women threw aside their jewels and finery, dressed plainly, bore themselves demurely; licentious young Florentines were transformed, as by magic, into sober, religious men; pious hymns took the place of Lorenzo's Carnival songs. The townsfolk passed their leisure hours seated quietly in their shops reading either the Bible or Savonarola's works. All prayed frequently, flocked to the churches, and gave largely to the poor. Most wonderful of all, bankers and tradesmen were impelled by scruples of conscience to restore ill-gotten gains, amounting to many thousand florins.[1] All men were wonderstruck by this singular and almost miraculous change; and notwithstanding the shattered state of his health, Savonarola must have been deeply rejoiced to see his people converted to so Christian a mode of life. Now indeed he might have died content! But his hour had not yet come; he was called by God to a higher fate.

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[1] Besides the evidence on this point furnished by the "Vita Latina," Burlamacchi, Pico, Barsanti, Frà Benedetto, and other biographers, the reader may refer to all contemporary historians, as, for instance, to Nardi, Guicciardini ("Storia Fiorentina"), and the correspondence of the Ten with the Court of Rome, edited by Padre Marchese.

This new state of things was naturally turned to ridicule by the Arrabbiati, who grew more and more furious, and vented their feelings by jeering at the Friar and his followers, and nicknaming them Piagnoni (Snivellers), Collitorti (Wrynecks), Stropiccioni (Toadies), and Masticapaternostri (Prayer-mumblers). Nevertheless, the Piagnoni were the only determined defenders of the people's rights; the readiest to fly to arms when Florence was threatened by the French; the most generous in giving money to the State, and in tenderly succouring the poor who were suffering from the high price of food and scarcity of work. For their devotion to the Republic was all the more tenacious, because liberty and religion were as one in their hearts; and in all public emergencies it was only on these followers of the Friar that the country could really depend.

Accordingly, to the great disgust of the Arrabbiati, the enthusiasm for Savonarola and St. Mark's became more and more general. Peasants and nobles from all the country round journeyed to Florence by night to be in time for the morning's discourse; some came even from distant Bologna to spend the Lenten season in Florence;[1] and the vast Duomo itself was too small to contain the throng. Many new converts asked leave to join the Tuscan congregation, and the number of brethren wearing the robe of St. Mark was incredibly multiplied. Instead of fifty, as at first, the community now counted two hundred and thirty souls; hence it was necessary to obtain from the Government the adjacent buildings of La Sapienza, which were accordingly connected with the convent by a passage tunnelled under the Via del Maglio. Many of the new monks were scions of the leading houses of Florence, such as six brothers of the Strozzi family; several of the Gondi, Salviati, and Acciaiuoli; others were men of mature age and of high standing in literature, science, and statesmanship, such as Pandolfo Rucellai, Giorgio Vespucci, uncle of the celebrated navigator, Zanobi Acciaiuoli, Blemmet, the Jewish teacher of Pico della Mirandola, the physician, Pietro Paolo da Urbino, and many more.[1]

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[1] "Vita Latina," Burlamacchi and the Florentine historians.

The mode of these men's conversion is likewise worthy of special remark, since it proves that Savonarola, instead of encouraging sudden resolves and fits of enthusiasm, always proceeded with the utmost caution. We find an example of this in the account given by the Florentine Bettuccio, more generally known as Frà Benedetto, of his own conversion. He was the son of a goldsmith, exercising the then profitable art of miniature painting, was in the prime of youth, of a joyous temperament, full of dash and courage, prompt to quarrel, a singer, musician, and poet, fond of good living, and entirely devoted to pleasure. Consequently he was a favourite guest in the gayest society, and led a life of frivolous gallantry.

"Tanto musco e profumo allor portavo,
Con tante pompe e leggiadrie e gale,
Che col cervel senza penne volavo."[2]

But these, he tells us, were evil days; in the time of Pope Alexander, days rife with avarice, sensuality, and unbelief:

"Nè quasi si credea dal tetto in su."[3]

Such was the life led by Bettuccio, the miniature painter, when Savonarola began to be renowned, and all Florence flocked to his sermons. Bettuccio, however, refused to follow the herd; for he was on the side of the Arrabbiati, and joined in their scoffs against the Piagnoni. But one day, when in the house of a noble and beautiful matron, the latter spoke of Savonarola's sermons in the warmest terms. He laughed at the time; but on another day he was induced by the lady's persuasions to accompany her to the Duomo. He describes his deep confusion on entering the church and finding himself among so great a company of believers, who stared at him with astonishment. At first he longed to escape, but somewhat reluctantly decided to remain. And as soon as Savonarola mounted the pulpit everything seemed changed to him. Having once fixed his eyes on the preacher he was unable to withdraw them; his attention was powerfully arrested, his mind impressed; and then, he says, "At last I knew myself to be as one dead rather than living." When the sermon was over, he wandered forth into lonely places, "and for the first time I turned my mind to my inner self." After long meditation he went home, and became a changed man. He threw aside his songs and musical instruments, forsook his companions, and discarded his scented attire:

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[1] *Vide* Padre Marchese, "Scritti," p. 141 and fol., for which work the author consulted the ancient annals of his own convent of St. Mark.

[2] (So much musk and perfume I wore, so many gauds and finery and frippery, that my head flew without wings.) *Vide* Frà Benedetto, "Cedrus Libani," a little poem published by Padre Marchese in the "Archivio Storico Italiano," Appendix vii.

[3] When one scarce believed in aught above one's roof.

> "Come un vento
> Spoglia 'mi al tutto d'ogni leggiadria."[1]

From that day he was one of the most assiduous of Savonarola's hearers, frequented the convent of St. Mark, repeated prayers and litanies, and even beheld strange visions and heard heavenly voices in the air."[2] "I had a hard struggle with my companions," he tells us, "who went about making mock of me ; and a still harder struggle with my own passions, which, breaking loose again from time to time, assailed me very fiercely." At last, when he felt sure of himself, he sought the austere Prior of St. Mark's and cast himself at his feet. His voice trembled, he could scarcely utter a word in the presence of him to whom he owed his regeneration ; nevertheless he stammered forth his desire to join the brotherhood. Savonarola reasoned with him on the danger of precipitate resolves, the difficulties of the monastic life, and concluded by counselling him to make a better trial of himself by leading a Christian life in the world, before crossing the convent threshold. The advice proved to be needed, for Bettuccio had again to fight against the violence of his passions, and was not always victorious in the struggle. After doing severe penance for these fresh lapses, and when assured by long trial of having really mastered the flesh, he returned to Savonarola in a calmer frame of mind. But the latter, who had kept him carefully in sight, would not yet allow him to assume the monastic robe, sending him instead to minister to the sick and bury the dead :

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[1] "Cedrus Libani." With the speed of the wind, I stripped off every dornment.

[2] He mentions these visions in bk. iii. of his "Vulnera Diligentis," MS. 2,985 of the Riccardi Library. See particularly chap. xx. and chap. xxiii., in which he describes a vision beheld by Michelangiolo Buonarotti in Rome. *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xix.

> " Cosi più mesi, in un santo ospitale,
> A vivi e morti carità facevo." [1]

From time to time he was summoned to the Friar's cell, to receive advice and hear lectures on the monastic life ; finally, on the 7th of November, 1495, he put on the robe, and on the 13th of November of the following year took the full vows, and assumed the name of Frà Benedetto.[2]

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[1] Thus, in a holy hospital, for many months, I did charity to the quick and the dead.

[2] The whole account of this conversion is taken from Frà Benedetto's own poem. For further particulars of his career, the reader may refer to the preface to the poem, written by Padre Marchese, and reprinted in a revised form in the latter's " Scritti varii."

The Florentine libraries contain many works by Frà Benedetto. Except-

This was how Savonarola gained one of the most faithful of his followers, one of the most steadfast in the hour of peril, and who preserved to the last an increasing admiration and almost worship for his master. The Friar was equally cautious in his advice to others, and never pressed any one to join the brotherhood. His only con-

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ing the above-mentioned poem, "Cedrus Libani," all are inedited, and nearly all treat of Savonarola. The Codices xxxiv. 7, and xxxvii. 318, of the National Library (the former being, as the author says, the last copy revised and corrected by himself), contain the first two books of the "Vulnera Diligentis," which gives, in the form of a dialogue, many biographical details of the highest value concerning Savonarola. Book iii. of the same work, discovered by the present writer, contains numerous particulars of the trials and execution of Savonarola and his fellow-martyrs, with narratives, explanations, and commentaries of his visions and prophecies. As before said, it is comprised in Codex 2,985 of the Riccardi Library. The Rinuccini Codex in the National Library, ii. 8, 123, contains the *secunda parte delle prophetie dello inclito martire del Signore Hieronymo Savonarola.* The first letter is illuminated, and has a miniature portrait of Savonarola, said by Padre Marchese to be the only known specimen of Frà Benedetto's work. Chap. xiii. also begins with an illuminated capital letter, representing the vision of the hand brandishing a sword over Florence. This, too, may be attributed to Frà Benedetto. Codex xxxv, 90, of the National Library, is a collection of several minor works of the same author :—1st, "Fons Vitæ," finished at sheet 88, is in three books and written in Latin. Book i. is a dialogue between *Homicida* and *Dominus*, and gives details of Frà Benedetto's life. Book ii. is on visions ; book iii. consists of religious meditations, hymns, and chants. The Homicida of bk. i. is Frà Benedetto himself, for after Savonarola's death he killed a man in a riot, though, according to Padre Marchese, in self-defence. He expiated this crime by prolonged penance and many years' imprisonment, during which period most of his works were composed. Accordingly he often refers to himself in these as *Frà Benedetto the homicide*, and is sometimes designated in old catalogues by the same appellation. This was why his works remained unknown for some time. 2nd, "Fasciculus Mirræ," from sheet 95 to 224, is a collection of sonnets, canticles, and religious hymns. 3rd, The little poem, "Cedrus Libani," from sheet 231 to sheet 257. 4th, A *most faithful* copy, in Frà Benedetto's hand, of all Savonarola's best poems. It also contains a few prayers and other items of slighter importance. At sheet 280 is a psalm by Savonarola. The lauds contained in the "Fasciculus Mirræ" includes one upon Savonarola (sheet 214), God's prophet and martyr.

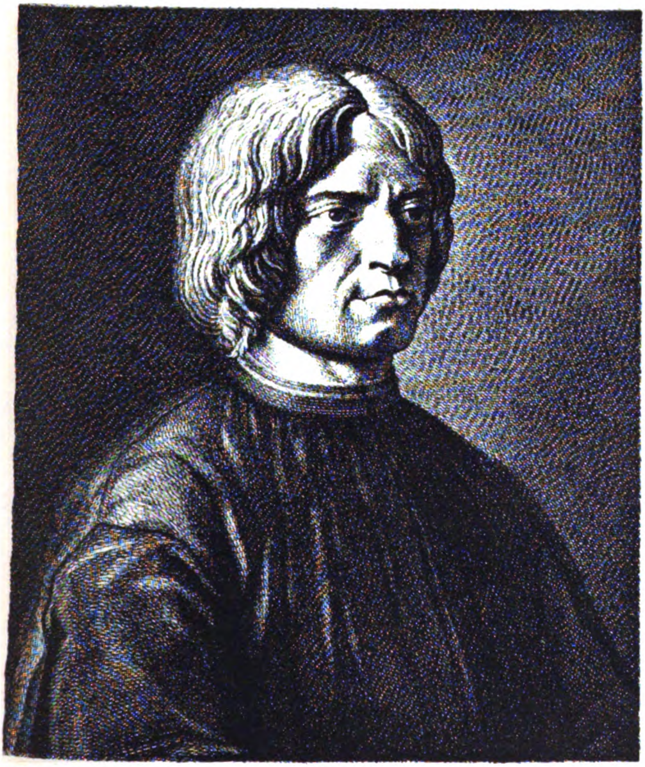
We should note, in conclusion, that Frà Benedetto, while zealously defending his master in these works, and attacking his detractors and persecutors with equal vigour, repeatedly declares his own submission to the Catholic Church.

cern was for the improvement of manners, the diffusion of morality, and the regeneration of the true doctrines of Christ, to which men's souls appeared dead. It was to this end that he now specially dedicated his whole time and strength, his entire heart and soul. When preaching on the holy life and Christian virtue his soul almost seemed to shine forth from his eyes, and his spiritual energy to be transfused by his voice into the people, who daily and visibly improved under his beneficent influence. Contemporary writers never cease expressing their wonder at this quasi-miracle; some are edified by the triumph thus achieved by religion, others regret the days of joyous ballads and carnival songs; but all are equally emphatic as to the change in public manners, and acknowledge that it was solely the work of Frà Girolamo Savonarola.

BOOK III.

CHAPTERS I.—VI.

(1495–1497.)



LORENZO DI PIETRO DE MEDICI
DETTO PER LE SUE SINGOLARI,
E GRANDI VIRTÙ IL MAGNIFICO.

nato il dì 2 Genn.° MCDXLVIII. morto il dì 9. Ap.le MCDXCII
Nicolao Simminettio Patricio et Academico Florentino Clariſsimo
Deque Cenſus Triumviro Vigilantiſsimo.
Preſo da un Buſto in terra cotta del Sig.r Gio Batta Dei Antiquario di S.A.R.e Cuſtode dell'Archivio Segreto di Palazzo Vecchio.

Giuliano Traballesi del.   Carlo Faucci inc. 1769.

CHAPTER I.

CHARLES VIII. RETURNS TO FRANCE—THE ALLIES AID PIERO DE' MEDICI'S ATTEMPT TO RE-ENTER FLORENCE—SAVONAROLA PREACHES AGAINST TYRANNY AND AGAINST THE MEDICI—THE LATTER ARE REPULSED.

(1495–1496.)

THE altered aspect of Italian affairs was now causing a serious change in the position of Savonarola and the Republic. During the early part of the year the French expedition had been attended by marvellous prosperity; King Charles had reached Naples without encountering obstacles of any kind by the way; the Aragonese had fled; the new kingdom been established as by a stroke of magic. But soon the king's fortunes began to decline as rapidly as they had risen. In a very short time the French had contrived to make themselves equally obnoxious to all the governments and peoples of Italy. Their conduct towards the Florentines cannot be too severely condemned; and everywhere they did nothing but demand money and hold out promises which they never fulfilled.[1] The Neapolitans were so disgusted by their insolence that they were already longing for the return of the Aragonese. The Italian governments felt terror-struck by the might of this foreign host that had traversed all Italy in triumph; but the most troubled of all was Ludovico the Moor, who had first summoned it across the Alps. He was deeply disquieted by seeing so many Lombard and Genoese exiles accompany the French, was terrified to find his personal enemy, Gian Giacomo Trivulzio, among the king's best and most valued commanders; and now his irritations and suspicions were increased by the refusal of Charles to fulfil the pledge made at the beginning of the war, of granting him the principality of Taranto. Therefore, again a prey to alarm, he was absorbed in weaving fresh schemes. After having summoned France to wreak destruction on Italy, he now resolved to put himself at the head of an Italian league *to drive away the barbarians.* And he succeeded in the attempt![1]

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[1] *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xx.

On the 31st of March, 1495, a League was concluded in Venice between that Republic, the Pope, the Emperor, and the King of Spain. Its ostensible purpose was to defend Christendom against the Turks, maintain the integrity of Italy and the allied States, and gather an army of 34,000 horse and 20,000 foot. But in fact the Sultan was one of the Powers most favourable to the League, and had promised to send men and money to its aid, inasmuch as its real object was to expel the French from Italy.[2] For there were secret clauses to the effect that Spain was to send a fleet to aid King Ferdinand to reconquer Naples; the Venetians were to attack the Adriatic coast; the Duke to seize Asti and bar the way against reinforcements from France; while the Emperor and Spain were to attack the French frontiers by land. Thus, with lightning speed, the Moor had on all sides raised up foes against France. King Charles was not ignorant of this. The shrewd French ambassador, Messer Philippe de Commines, instantly divined the object of the League, and on the very day that it was signed sent off a despatch from Venice to Naples. He then hastened his departure, in order to join the king, whose only means of safety consisted in leaving strong garrisons in Naples, and trying to cut his way back to France with the remainder of his army.

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[1] Nardi, Guicciardiani, Sismondi, Leo, Commines, &c.

[2] Sismondi, "Hist. des Répub. Ital.," vol. vi. chap. xiii., and the above-mentioned authors.

The ambassador made his journey through Tuscany, the only Italian State that, regardless of the promises and threats of the allies, still remained faithful to Charles. As soon as he reached Florence, Commines hastened to St. Mark's. He was anxious to be personally acquainted with Savonarola, and gain an exact idea of the prophet whose fame seemed to fill the whole world. And this skilled judge of human nature came forth from the Friar's cell fired with an intense reverence and admiration to which he frequently recurs in his Memoirs. He had expected to find a remarkable man, but found a marvel instead. His wonder was aroused from the first moment, on hearing the Friar treat of politics with an extraordinary knowledge of men and things. "He spoke of the *Great Assembly* [1] going on in Venice far better than myself, who was just come from it. Then, as every one can see, he has led the purest of lives; his sermons against vice have established good morals in Florence. I have no desire to pass judgment on his revelations, but he certainly predicted to me and to the king things which no one believed at the time, and which have been all fulfilled since. As to his having made use of the confessional, as was asserted by his enemies, for the discovery of State secrets, I declare that I believe him to be an honest man, and that the things he has revealed could never have been told him by any Florentine."

Commines, indeed, felt such complete confidence in Savonarola, that he most urgently pressed him to say whether or no the king could escape from the dangers by which he was beset. Thereupon the Friar took a solemn tone and began to recapitulate the king's broken vows and unredeemed pledges, his disobedience to God's commands, and his abandonment of the great task of reforming Italy and the Church. "These new dangers," he said in conclusion, "are forerunners of the still more severe chastisement by which the king will be scourged, if he return not to obedience to the Lord, and to the way of truth. As regards the present, he will have to fight hard, but will come out victorious in the end." After this strange interview, Commines at once continued his journey to the Neapolitan kingdom.[1]

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[1] This is the term given by Commines to the gathering of people engaged in the League.

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[1] We subjoin some of the many passages devoted to Savonarola by Commines, since the testimony of a foreign contemporary, and of so keen-witted a man, with a personal knowledge of Savonarola, is specially valuable. "J'ay dit en quelque endroit de cette matière d'Italie, comme il y avoit un frère prescheur . . . renommé de fort saincte vie . . . appellé Frère Hieronyme, qui a dit beaucoup de choses avant qu'elles fussent advenues, comme j'ay desja dit cy-dessus, et tousjours avoit soustenu que le Roy passeroit les monts, . . . *et disoit que le Roy estoit esleu de Dieu pour reformer l'Eglise par force, et chastier les tyrans.* . . . Sa vie estoit la plus belle du monde ainsi qu'il se pouvait voir, et ses sermons preschant contre les vices, et a reduit en icelle cité maintes gens à bien vivre, comme j'ay dit." . . . And in allusion to what was alleged by some against Savonarola's prophecies, namely, that he gave out as divine revelations intelligence secretly acquired from the citizens, Commines remarks :—"Je ne les veux (the enemies of the Friar) point accuser ny excuser. . . . Mais il a dit maintes choses vrayes, que ceux de Florence n'eussent sceu luy avoir dites. Mais touchant le Roy et des maux qu'il dist luy devoir advenir, luy est advenu, ce que vous voyez; qui sceut premier la mort de son filz; puis la sienne, et ay des lettres qu'il escrivoit audit Seigneur" (Commines, "Mémoires," ed. cit., bk. viii. chap. xxvi. pp. 593 and 595). Here is another important passage referring to the author's interview with Savonarola: "J'ay oublié de dire, que moy estant arrivé à Florence, allant au devant du Roy, allay visiter un frère prescheur, appellé frère Hieronyme, demeurant en un convent reformé, homme de saincte vie, comme on disoit, qui quinze ans avoit demeuré audit lieu; et estoit avec moy un Maistre d'hostel du Roy, appellé Jehan François, sage homme. La cause de l'aller voir, fut parce qu'il avoit toujours presché en grande faveur du Roy, et sa parole avoit gardé les Florentins de tourner contre nous; car jamais prescheur n'eut tant de credit en cité. Il avoit tousjours asseuré la venue du Roy (quelque chose

Meanwhile Charles VIII. had started from Naples, leaving strong garrisons throughout the kingdom, and taking the rest of the army with him under the command of Trivulzio, in order to fight his way back to France. Reaching Rome on the 1st of June, he hoped to have speech with the Pope; but the latter had fled towards Orvieto the previous day. Alexander Borgia had much reason to fear the anger of the French. He had first of all invited them to Italy; then, being bribed by the Aragonese, had changed sides; when the fortunes of the French were at their height, he had again

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qu'on dit ne qu'on escrivit, au contraire); *disant qu'il estoit envoyé de Dieu pour chastier les tyrans d'Italie*, et que rien ne pouvoit resister, ne se defendre contre luy. Avoit dit aussi qu'il viendroit à Pise et qu'il y entreroit, et que ce jour mourroit l'Estat de Florence; et ainsi advint, car Pierre de Medicis fut chassé ce jour. Et maintes autres choses avoit preschées avant qu'elles advinssent, comme la mort de Laurens de Medicis; et aussi disoit publiquement l'avoir par revelation, *et preschoit que l'Estat de l'Eglise seroit reformé à l'espée. Cela n'est pas encore advenu; mais en fut bien près, et encore le maintient.* Plusieurs le blasmoient de ce qu'il disoit que Dieu luy avoit revelé, autres y ajôustérent foy: de ma part je le repute bon homme. Aussi luy demanday si le Roy pourroit passer sans peril de sa personne, veu la grande assemblée que faisoient les Venitiens, de laquelle il sçavoit mieux parler que moy qui en venois. Il me respondit qu'il auroit affaire en chemin, mais que l'honneur luy en demeureroit, et n'eut il que cent hommes en sa compagnie; et que Dieu qui l'avoit conduit au venir, le conduiroit encores à son retour: *mais pour ne s'estre bien acquitté de la reformation de l'Eglise, comme il devoit, et pour avoir souffert que ses gens pillassent et desrobassent ainsi le peuple, aussi bien ceux de son party, et qui lui ouvroient les portes sans contrainte, comme les ennemis, que Dieu avoit donné une sentence contre luy, et en bref, auroit un coup de foüet.* Mais que je luy disse, que s'il vouloit avoir pitié du peuple, et deliberer en soy de garder ses gens de malfaire, et les punir quand ils le feroient, comme son office le requiert, que Dieu revoqueroit sa sentence ou la diminueroit; et qu'il ne pensast point estre excusé pour dire, je ne fais nul mal. Et me dit que luy mesme iroit au devant du Roy, et luy diroit; et ainsi le fit, et parla de la restitution des places des Florentins. Il me cheut en pensée la mort de Monseigneur le Dauphin, quand il parla de ceste sentence de Dieu, car je ne veis autre chose que le Roy peust prendre à coeur; mais dis encores cecy afin que mieux on entende *que tout cedit voyage fust vray mystere de Dieu*" (Bk. viii. chap. iii. pp. 499-501).

joined them; and now he was once more not only their foe, but one of the main contrivers of the League. Besides all this a singular fact had occurred, thoroughly characteristic of the Borgia and his times. On the first passage of the French through Rome, Prince Djem, brother of the Grand Turk Bajazet II., was a prisoner in the city. He was a spirited youth, thoroughly Eastern in appearance and temperament, was devoted to music and poetry, was very popular, and had contested his brother's throne with some chance of success. But being driven by adversity to take refuge in the Isle of Rhodes, he had there been captured by the Grand Master of the Order, and consigned by him to Pope Innocent VIII. On the latter's death he had fallen into the power of Alexander Borgia, who retained him as a very precious hostage. The Sultan, in fact, so greatly dreaded his brother's release, that he allowed the Pope 40,000 ducats yearly for his maintenance, and frequently offered still larger sums for his murder. Accordingly, when passing through Rome, King Charles immediately asked the Pope's permission to carry off Prince Djem, saying that he would be useful to him in the campaign against the Sultan. Alexander reluctantly consented, and was also obliged to yield him his son Cesare (later Duke of Valentinois), and although the latter was nominally sent as an ambassador, and treated with suitable respect, in reality both he and the prince were hostages in the king's hands against the fickleness of the Pope. Suddenly, however, Cesare made his escape from the camp, and a few days later the youthful Djem unexpectedly expired. Some said that the Pope had given the latter a dose of slow poison before consigning him to the king; but others declared that Cesare had administered the drug by his orders. However this may have been, it is certain that the Sultan had written to the Pope a short time before, promising him 300,000 ducats and his permanent alliance on receipt of his brother's corpse.[1]

But although Charles had so much cause for resentment, this was no moment to halt in Rome, nor to think of revenge. He therefore continued his journey, and entered Siena on the 13th of June. The news of this event roused incredible excitement among the Florentines, who now held Charles in detestation. They still adhered to the terms of their treaty, but could not forgive him for having broken faith with them, violated his engagements, and encouraged the revolt of Pisa. The king had done nothing but make repeated demands for money, always promising to give up the fortresses, and compel the Pisans to surrender, but leaving both pledges unfulfilled. Accordingly, despite all their efforts, the Florentines were in a state of increasing peril. They had sent their most courageous young citizens to the field under the command of Piero Capponi; they had engaged Ercole Bentivoglio and other captains; but the Pisans were constantly receiving reinforcements from Genoa, Siena, Milan, and even from Charles himself. When the Florentine ambassadors reminded the latter of his pledges, he replied: "But what can I do if your Signory discontent all their subjects?" And he afterwards sent the Pisans over six hundred Swiss and Gascon foot soldiers, who were of great assistance to them in the war.[1] In this way rebellion was encouraged throughout the territories of the Republic. At the same time, on the 26th of May, Montepulciano gave itself to the Sienese, who immediately occupied its fortress. And now, with things in this state, the king was drawing near, and, what was still more alarming, with Piero de' Medici in his train!

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[1] The letters of the Pope and the Sultan are given in Burchart's Diary, and have been published in French by Mons. De Cherrier, vol. i. p. 416 and fol. They are also reproduced in Sanuto's Chronicles "La Spedizione di Carlo VIII." p. 45 and fol. De Cherrier gives the Pope's letter to the ambassador, and Sanuto a very short one addressed to the Sultan, while both give a very explicit epistle from the latter conceived in the following terms: "It were well that the said Djem our brother, who in any case is exposed to death, and in danger of being removed from the hands of your Greatness, should be speedily put to death, the which would be life to him, bring profit and tranquillity to your Potency, and be of great satisfaction to ourselves. . . . Wherefore if your Potency will compass the same and send his (Djem's) body to any place on our coasts, I, the forementioned Sultan Bajazeth Khan, promise to despatch to any spot named by your Greatness three hundred thousand gold ducats, so that your Potency may use them to purchase lands for your sons." . . . This is the translation given by Sanuto (p. 46), and differing very little from the Latin epistle given in Burchart.

No sooner was this known in Florence than all flew to arms. And, as the historian, Jacopo Nardi, relates, it was marvellous to see how rapidly men and boys took up arms, and how private citizens competed with the Commissioners of the Signory in stocking the city with weapons and supplies. In a surprisingly short time eleven thousand foot cuirassiers were collected from the outlying villages; every householder in Florence had gathered together his friends and domestics; all the towers were furnished with missiles, all the gates barred, many of the streets barricaded, and the Gonfaloniers of the Companies kept guard over the city by night, no foreign soldiers being allowed admittance at this time.[2]

And all these preparations were the work of the Piagnoni, whom the Arrabbiati declared to be only fit to mumble Paters and Aves. It is true that they never neglected the services of the church; that they held public prayers, gave large sums in charity, and carried the Madonna dell' Impruneta in solemn procession; but those most zealous in devotion were also the readiest to bear arms. And Savonarola, who was then continuing his course of sermons on the Psalms, always cried from the pulpit, "Be instant in prayer, but neglect no human precaution; help yourselves in all ways and by all means, and then the Lord will be with ye. Have courage, my brethren, and above all preserve union! If ye will all be united and agreed in one purpose, victory shall be yours, even if all the world be against ye. Be not terrified by present events, for we are hardly at the beginning of the game. Ye will pass through terrible times, ye will see enemies on all sides, ye will hear that they are in Rome, in this or that quarter, and here close upon ye. And then alas for Florence! Alas for Italy! Be united, therefore, among yourselves, united in the Lord, for the righteous shall conquer."[1]

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[1] Sismondi, "Histoire des Républiques Italiennes"; Michelet, "Renaissance"; Leo; Guicciardini, "Storia d'Italia"; Nardi, &c. French historians are no less severe than Italian in condemning the conduct of Charles VIII to the Florentine Republic.

[2] The city was in a state of great suspense, "with much fortifying of houses and supplying of arms." So Luca Landucci tells us in his "Diario Fiorentino," p. 106. See also Nardi, and other contemporary Florentine historians of the period.

Meanwhile the first ambassadors[2] sent by the Republic to King Charles in Siena obtained nothing but rough replies from him. They begged to know by which road he intended to march, in order to furnish it with the necessary supplies; and his answer was, "Furnish your whole territory." He was highly indignant to find that Florence had flown to arms, as at the approach of a foe. And the ambassadors, on their side, finding Piero de' Medici in the camp, and fearing that the king purposed to reinstate him in Florence, expressed themselves with more daring than diplomacy, so that both parties were increasingly irritated, and there was no hope of coming to a friendly arrangement, unless some one of great weight and firmness could be persuaded to intervene. Again, with one accord, all turned to Savonarola for help. He alone was capable of taking a firm, imperative tone with the king without exciting his wrath; for Charles had an almost superstitious respect for him, and had kept up a continual correspondence with him, by letters, of which the tenour was known to all. In fact, one of these epistles had been intercepted and published by Savonarola's enemies, in order to stir the wrath of the League against him; but it had produced the contrary result of increasing his popularity, inasmuch as its terms were to this effect: "Most Christian Sire,—It is the Lord's will that the Florentines should remain allied with your Majesty; but He wills that your protection should serve to extend their freedom, not the power of any individual citizen; forasmuch as the Divine Providence hath ordained and decided the overthrow of all tyrants. The Lord will inflict terrible chastisements on those private citizens who should seek to usurp, as in the past, the rule of this flourishing Republic; forasmuch as the present new popular government of the State hath been constituted by God, and not by man; and He hath chosen this city in order to magnify it, and hath filled it with His servants, and he that would touch it would touch the pupil of His eye. Wherefore, O Sire, if you will not obey Him by maintaining your pledges to the Florentines, and restoring their fortresses, many adversities shall come upon you, and the nations shall rise against you."[1]

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[1] Predica xviii., "sopra i Salmi."

[2] These ambassadors were Domenico Bonsi, Giuliano Salviati, Andrea dei Pazzi. *Vide* Desjardins, "Négociations," &c., vol. i. p. 613 and fol.

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[1] This was dated 21st May, 1496, and was published with many blunders and alterations, of which Savonarola himself complained in his sermon of the 28th of July of the same year: "This letter that I wrote to the King of France hath been printed without understanding, and is full of errors." A copy of the printed version (undated) is comprised in the Guicciardini collection, now preserved in the National Library of Florence. There is a less incorrect copy in the Riccardi Library, codex 2,053. *Vide* Appendix (to the Italian edition), doc. xxi. As still better evidence of the general belief that the descent of Charles VIII. was predestined by heaven, we may give a few passages of an oration

Certainly, he who was capable of writing to the king in these terms was the man best fitted to address him at this juncture and save the Republic from its pressing dangers. Accordingly, at Poggibonsi, in June, 1496, Charles VIII was again confronted by Savonarola. The latter assumed his commanding, prophetic tone, and repeated by word of mouth all that he had already expressed in writing. The king was reminded that he was now returning to his own country almost as a fugitive, that the new perils in which he was involved had been already foretold to him in Florence, and repeated by letter: "Most Christian Prince," continued Savonarola, "thou hast provoked the Lord to anger by breaking faith with the Florentines, by forsaking the task of reforming the Church, that the Lord had so often announced to thee by my lips, and for which He had chosen thee by such manifest signs. Thou wilt escape from the present dangers; but shouldst thou fail to resume thy abandoned task, shouldst thou fail to obey the commands which the Lord once more repeateth to thee by the voice of His poor servant, I tell thee that still heavier woes shall be poured on thee by His wrath, and that another shall be chosen in thy stead." [1]

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addressed to the king in 1494 by Marsilio Ficino: "Veri namque simile est et Christianissimum Gallorum Regem a Christi mitti, et Carolum, præ ceteris insignem pietate Regem, christiana pietate duci; præsertim cum iter opusque tantum ea mente sis agressus, ut sanctam Jerusalem sævissimis barbaris occupatam, summo humani generis Redemptori denique redimas. . . . Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini, Carolus charus nobis, excelsus, rex pacificus. Hæc est dies quam fecit Dominus, exultemus et lætemur in ea." . . . Ficino goes on in a still more exaggerated strain of eulogy, reprehensible enough from any man's lips. And in the case of one who might be said to be a creature of the Medici, and who, after extolling Savonarola in this fashion, subsequently turned against him, it excites particular disgust. *Vide* "Oratio Marsilii Ficini ad Carolum Magnum Gallorum Regem, Ficini Opera," the forementioned edition, vol. i. pp. 960–961.

[1] This legation is mentioned by Nardi and all the other historians; also in the "Vita Latina," sheet 20; in Burlamacchi, p. 73 and fol. *Vide* Appendix (to the Italian edition), doc. xxii. De Cherrier (ii. 199) says that Savonarola was escorted on this embassy by fifty citizens, but

The king appeared almost terror-struck by this language, and instantly continuing his journey towards Pisa, begged Savonarola to bear him company thither. But the latter, after having held a second interview with him at Castel Fiorentino, decided to turn back, for fear of being captured by the enemies of Florence. On the 21st of June he announced from his pulpit that the threatened danger was once more averted, and made this the text for fresh exhortations in favour of godly living, concord, and free government.[1]

Meanwhile the king had entered Pisa in triumph. The citizens placed all their finest mansions at his disposal, the ladies stripped themselves of all their jewels to present them to Charles and his Barons, in order, by thus satiating his avarice, to keep him on their side. All this formed a strong contrast with the surly behaviour of the Florentines. Charles was already well disposed towards the Pisans in consequence of these signs of affection, when, one day, as he issued from church after mass, he was met by a procession of all the fairest women of Pisa, robed in black, with loosened hair, bare feet, and ropes about their necks,

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this is a blunder, and quotes the Register 471 (instead of 47) of class 111 (instead of class iii.), which, however, makes no mention of so numerous a following. Commines also speaks of Savonarola's different missions, and frequently repeats the gist of the Friar's letters and speeches to the king. Seeing the real weight of the chronicler's testimony, we may be allowed to quote some other passages from his Memoirs. "Il a tousjours presché publiquement que le Roy retourneroit de rechef en Italie *pour accomplir cette commission que Dieu luy avoit donnée, qui estoit de reformer l'Eglise par l'espée, et de chasser les tyrans d'Italie, et que au cas qu'il ne le fit, Dieu le puniroit cruellement* et tous ses sermons premiers et ceux de present, il les a fait imprimer, et se vendent. Cette menace qu'il faisoit au Roy . . . luy a plusieurs fois escrite le dit Hieronyme, peu de temps avont son trespas, et ainsi le ma dit de bouche ledict Hieronyme, quand je parlay à luy (que fut au retour d'Italie), en me disant que la sentence estoit donnée contre le Roy au ciel, au cas qu'il n' accomplit ce que Dieu luy avoit ordonné" (Commines, "Mémoires," ed. cit., bk viii. chap. xxvi. pp. 593, 594).

[1] Predica xxv., "sopra i Salmi."

in token of their detested subjection to Florence, who all cried aloud to him to restore their freedom. The whole population gathered round and joined in their supplications, and Charles and his captains seemed much moved by the scene. The Barons were assembled in council, and for a moment it was seriously proposed to assist the Pisans; but this plan, like all the rest, was afterwards abandoned. The king neither gave liberty to the Pisans, nor yielded up the fortresses of the Florentines, and, regardless of his recent promises to Savonarola, continued his march with his army by way of Lucca and Pontremoli. At Fornovo, on the river Taro, he encountered the allied troops, who considerably outnumbered his force of 1,000 men. A pitched battle took place on the 6th of July, and there was afterwards much dispute as to which side had won the victory. It is certain that the French succeeded in their purpose of forcing a passage, and that the allies tried in vain to drive them back. Charles VIII. halted at Asti on his march, again indulged there in pleasure, and then slowly pursued his way to France. On the 7th of July Ferdinand II. of Aragon made his entry into Naples, and after re-establishing his fallen government met with no further opposition excepting from the few garrisons scattered through the kingdom, which were still holding out without any hope of reinforcement or support. Thus, in less than the space of one year, the French had twice traversed the length and breadth of Italy, easily conquering and easily conquered, disgusting friends and enemies alike, and leaving behind them sad memorials of their falsity and greed.[1]

Their attitude towards Florence remained unaltered. Whether it was that their captain in command of the castle of Pisa had secret orders from the king, differing from those openly sent, or whether, as was said by some, he had fallen in love with a Pisan lady, it is certain that he never surrendered the fortresses. And on one occasion, when the Florentines, after a skirmish, pursued the Pisan troops almost to St. Mark's Gate, he actually opened fire on them from the walls, and killed several of their men. The Republic made this the subject of repeated remonstrance, despatched successive embassies and more money to the king, and even promised to succour his scattered garrisons in the kingdom of Naples; but all was in vain. Yet, in the month of September, Messer Niccolò Alamanni at last returned from France with special orders from the king to his officers and men, enjoining them to yield the fortresses and relinquish the subsidies furnished by Pisa. Instead of obeying this decree the French commandants sold the fortress of Pisa to the citizens for 14,000 florins in January, 1496, and received 10,000 more in payment of the artillery they left behind. The fortresses of Sarzana and Sarzanello were sold to the Genoese for 20,000 florins; that of Pietrasanta to the Lucchese for 30,000; and that of Leghorn was the only one restored to the Florentines.[1]

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[1] Guicciardini, Nardi, Cerretani, Parenti, Commines, Sismondi, Leo, Michelet.

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[1] *Vide* the above-mentioned writers. How deeply these insults were resented by the people of Florence is proved by the following extract from Rinuccini's "Ricordi Storici," p. clix.: "On the 2nd of January (*Florentine style*) news was received in Florence that the French commandant, who held the new citadel for that barbarous traitor and assassin, Charles VIII., the unworthy King of France, had given up and consigned the said citadel to the Pisan citizens, who were then governing independently, although he (the king) had repeatedly sworn by oaths and double treaties with his hand on the sacred stone and before the altar of Santa Maria del Fiore, to restore the said citadel to the Florentines, . . . the which was an act of treason of a barbarian, who was a worse traitor than Judas and Ganellone di Pontieri, inasmuch as we were leagued and confederated with him, and although by holding out false hopes and frequently promising to give it up, he and his murdering ministers together had cheated us out of more than three hundred thousand florins, and we trusted in his disloyalty and perfidy, the which was more like unto treason than was ever heard before, and similar to that related of Gano (Jehan) of Mainz, who at least was not a king."

Nevertheless, the departure of the French from Italy greatly increased the insecurity of Florence. The allies being no longer threatened from other quarters were now free to turn their arms against that Republic. Entertaining a mortal hatred for the new government, they determined to punish its fidelity to France and its refusal to join the League which, as they pretended, had been formed on purpose to free Italy from the barbarians. Accordingly Florence was now in the gravest danger, and, with so many powerful enemies arrayed against her, placed her only hope in the discord prevailing amongst them. For whereas the Pope and Venice desired the reinstatement of Piero de' Medici, Duke Ludovico, while ostensibly favouring the plan, had a personal dislike for Piero, and having come to an understanding with the Arrabbiati, and nourishing some distant hope of one day subjecting the Republic to his own rule, was trying meanwhile to ensnare it by secret and deceptive advances.[1] However the allies concurred for the moment in encouraging Piero de' Medici to collect men and money for an attempt upon Florence, and, as may well be imagined, he promptly began his preparations. Although already bankrupt in purse and credit, yet he contrived by a desperate effort to scrape together 10,000 ducats and gave them to Virginio Orsini for the hire of his former troops. Orsini, who had ignominiously fled from the French camp at the battle of the Taro, threw himself heartily into the undertaking for the sake of retrieving his military reputation. It was arranged that when he and Piero advanced upon Florence, Giovanni Bentivoglio, the hired general of Ludovico and Venice, was to simultaneously invade the Republic from the Bolognese frontier; while Caterina Sforza, the ruler of Imola and Forlì, was to despatch troops from another point. Siena and Perugia had also promised to send strong contingents. Accordingly the fallen tyrant's expedition seemed to have every chance of success. But once begun, the aspect of affairs quickly changed. Piero and Orsini approached the confines of the Republic by easy stages, always expecting to be overtaken by promised contingents which never arrived, and thus both time and money were wasted.

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[1] *Vide* Desjardins, vol. i. pp. 657–658, letter and notes dated the 17th of May. De Cherrier, vol. ii. p. 315.

While the Mediceans were taking things so coolly, the citizens of Florence had been stirred by Savonarola to the most energetic efforts. The Friar had kept silence for some time, on account of the growing ill-feeling against him in Rome, of which more will be said in the ensuing chapter. But on withdrawing from the pulpit, he had announced that grave dangers were overhanging the city, and had caused the law against Parliaments to be carried, that was to be the safeguard of its freedom. Now that the dangers foretold by him had really come to pass, his name instantly rose into new favour, and his daring was increased. Throwing aside all personal considerations, he reappeared in the pulpit on the 11th of October, to encourage the citizens and rouse them to the defence of their country. The first part of his sermon was entirely on religion: "The life of man, O my brethren," he said, "is a continual struggle upon earth; especially for the true Christian, inasmuch as he hath to fight against all hindrances to the spirit. He wars against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and is continually fighting. Thus it was with the apostles and martyrs, thus will it ever be with good Christians. God willeth it for their greater glory in the life to come. Wherefore marvel ye not if in announcing new things we meet with so many contradictions. To me it is a marvel that they be no greater. And inasmuch as it behoves us to fight, we have now returned to the camp, to put a little order in our disarrayed forces and equip them for a new campaign. We have two things to do: first, to fight and that unceasingly and to the death; and secondly, to conquer, for the cause of Christ is bound to have victory. Fear not, for in the end the victory will be ours; and if I were to die, this cause would still be even as the Hydra of the poet, the which, when one of its heads is cut off shooteth forth seven others." Continuing in the same strain, the Friar then turned his discourse from religion to politics, and began with ironical remarks on those who spoke ill of the new government. "Magnificent Signori, whenever ye have some difficult business on hand, I would have ye call one of these chatterers and say to him:—Tell me now, what is to be done concerning this matter? And if that man should know what to say, I would forfeit my mantle. You will see that either he will know not what to reply, or will speak some gross folly. And then take ye a peck of birdseed and say to that man: Come, take this and go feed the fowls, but leave State business alone." [1]

The sermon went on a little longer in this tone of burlesque; but when Savonarola at last broached the grave and important question of the day, his language changed and became terribly earnest. He will have no half measures when the country is in danger. In church, in the pulpit, crucifix in hand, he openly and loudly counsels the citizens to put to death all who seek to re-establish tyranny and reinstate the Medici in Florence "One must treat these men as the Romans treated those who sought the recall of Tarquinius. Thou that respecte~~th~~ -st not Christ, wilt thou respect private citizens? Do justice, I tell thee. *Cut off his head, were he even the chief and*

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[1] This passage occurs in the last but three of the "Prediche sui Salmi" collected by Violi, who dated it 11th of October. It was also printed separately with the date of the 10th.

head front of thy house; cut off his head! Remember the law that hath been made against Parliaments! Teach it to thy children, write it in all places. Thou must trust in nought but in this Great Council of ours, which is the work of God and not of men; and let all who would change it, or play the tyrant, or establish a government of private citizens, be accursed of the Lord for ever and ever." He then exhorted his hearers to show energy, courage, and determination in adopting necessary measures; since "he that hopeth for help from Heaven without helping himself, tempteth his Lord." He repeated this advice with similar energy on the 18th and 25th of the same month; and only when assured that the courage of the people had revived did he again lapse into the silence now imposed upon him by causes which will presently be described.

It was not long before the effect of these sermons was seen. Four days after the delivery of the first an enactment was passed, again setting a price on the Medici's heads, and that was virtually an almost general summons to arms. It ran pretty much as follows: "Seeing that Piero de' Medici, in his tyrannical greed, hath made many attempts against the liberty of Florence, the Eight of *Guardia e Balìa* do now declare him a rebel; wherefore, in virtue of the statutes, he may be killed with impunity. And inasmuch as he is seen to persevere in his evil intent, by stirring against this city not only many Roman Barons, but the Supreme Pontiff, and almost all the potentates of Italy, hoping by their favour to crush your liberty, usurp your revenues, violate your women and maidens, and resume the course of tyranny with which he and his ancestors so long oppressed your city, it hath been decreed by the said *Signori*, *Otto di Guardia e Balìa*, that whoever kills the said Piero de' Medici, who seeks to destroy our liberty, shall receive a reward of 4,000 broad florins of gold."[1] Later a reward of 2,000 florins was likewise offered for the head of Giuliano de' Medici;[2] and officials were appointed to administer their property in the interests of the Republic.[3]

But this was not enough, nor did the Florentine people stop here. Savonarola's sermons had roused both Arrabbiati and Piagnoni to arms, in their common hatred to the Medici, and Piero's approach excited either party to equal fear and indignation. Prompt and efficacious measures were accordingly taken. The war with Pisa was at once suspended, barely 2,000 foot and 300 men-at-arms being left in the camp. And 1,000 foot soldiers and 200 men-at-arms were despatched to the neighbourhood of Cortona as a check upon the enemy supposed to be advancing on that side. At the same time a body of 1,500 foot and 300 men-at-arms was encamped near the Sienese border, to prevent the forces of that State from joining the Mediceans. Thus Piero found himself practically surrounded on all sides. He lingered inactively between Tavernelle and Panicale, awaiting promised contingents which never arrived. His purse being exhausted by this delay, his army dispersed, and even Virginio Orsini marched away. Thus Piero's expedition ended in smoke. He was left in the field with a mere handful of men, had reaped nothing but failure and mortification, and given the last blow to his exhausted credit. Accordingly he was compelled to take flight, and, groaning over the broken faith and false promises of the allies, strayed back to Rome to seek refuge at the Court or with his friends.[4]

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[1] Provision of the Greater Council passed on the 15th of October, 1495; in the Florence Archives, "Provvisioni," Registro 187, at sheet 120.

[2] "Provvisione" of the 26th of November, 1495. Ibid., sheet 142.

[3] "Provvisione" of the 19th of December, 1495. Ibid., sheet 157.

[4] Besides contemporary historians, see also Varchi, i. 94–95; Ammirato bk. xxvi. (at the close).

Meanwhile the Florentines, rejoicing at the dispersal of the threatened storm, again despatched their forces to Pisa, and felt growing distrust in the League, which, as was now clearly seen, under pretence of saving Italy, only sought to crush the Republic.

CHAPTER II.

THE POPE ISSUES A BRIEF SUMMONING SAVONAROLA TO ROME. HIS REPLY. ANOTHER BRIEF PROHIBITS HIM FROM PREACHING, BUT THE TEN PROCURE ITS TACIT REVOCATION. A CARDINAL'S HAT IS OFFERED TO SAVONAROLA, BUT HE REFUSES TO ACCEPT IT.

(1495–1496.)

THE hatred of the Arrabbiati and Frateschi against Piero de' Medici was the real cause of the failure of his expedition; for had the allies been really determined to help him, the city of Florence could scarcely have withstood their attack. Hence the ill-success of the enterprise may be chiefly attributed to the lack of harmony between the members of the League. Duke Ludovico had never forgotten the insults he had received from Piero de' Medici; and although the latter was now lavish in protestations of friendship and respect, had resolved to prevent his reinstatement in Florence. Besides, he was now reconciled with the Arrabbiati who had succeeded in rousing his violent irritation against Savonarola by giving him to understand that the Friar made direct allusion to him, and actually mentioned him by name in his sermons against the vices of Italian potentates and in his descriptions of tyrants. Accordingly, Ludovico had long joined in their schemes for

Savonarola's overthrow.[1] In this way the Arrabbiati were able to carry out their purpose of covertly attacking the popular government, while Ludovico, by persecuting a Friar who was opposed to him, made fresh friends in Florence, and improved his chances of gaining a foothold there in the future. To this end his orator, Paolo Somenzi, sojourned in the city, and, as we shall see, almost acted the part of a spy and provocative agent (*agente provocatore*), receiving efficacious assistance from his colleague, Francesco Tranchedino, the Milanese orator at Bologna.[2]

As regarded the rest of the allies, the Venetians objected to these secret arrangements and machinations on the part of the Milanese Duke, and continued favourable to Piero de' Medici; but they were the only power decidedly inclined to reinstate him in Florence. Even the Pope himself was very cold upon this point, since his chief purpose was the aggrandisement of his own offspring; hence he too secretly yearned to fix his rapacious claws on the Florentine Republic, and had no sympathy to spare for any other object. It was therefore easy for the Arrabbiati and the Duke of Milan to obtain his co-operation in the deadly war they had planned against Savonarola; and having once kindled the ire of so tenacious a hater, their designs advanced rapidly to fulfilment.

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[1] Pitti, in his "Storia di Firenze," says: "For the which reason his (Savonarola's) enemies were more submissive than ever to the Duke of Milan, who, being desirous of restricting the power of the Government, with their help, had already, in the year 1495, at their instance, obtained briefs from Rome, through his brother, the Cardinal, to prohibit the Friar from preaching" ("Arch. Stor. Ital.," vol. i. p. 50). Nardi frequently dwells on the intrigues of the Arrabbiati. At p. 88 of vol. i. he says: "Nevertheless many of the leading citizens being ill-content with this form of government, they, while dissimulating their real motive, cunningly opposed the above-mentioned Frà Girolamo, since he had helped to establish it, and at the same time the Pope, incited thereunto by certain citizens and ecclesiastics, once more summoned the Friar to Rome, &c." Almost identical statements are to be found in Guicciardini's "Storia d'Italia" and "Storia di Firenze." But one of Savonarola's letters to the Moor, and those of the latter's envoys and spies, throw a still stronger light on the fact, that the persecutions directed against the Friar originated in political rather than religious causes.

[2] The letters of Somenzi and Tranchedino were often quoted and some published in the first (Italian) edition of this work. Many others were subsequently published by Prof. Del Lungo in the "Arch. Storico Ital.," New Series, vol. xviii. part i. p. 2 and fol. Nevertheless much of the correspondence is still inedited, and some of the letters will be mentioned and others given *in extenso* farther on. On the 27th of January, 1495, Somenzi wrote that the Friar was persisting "in his abominable tendencies and deeds. For the which reason I am making some efforts to rouse this people to enmity against him." And on the 8th of February he added: "So far the practices against the Friar have gone well, and I hope they will have the good result that is desired." But on the 18th of March he was obliged to write: "It is thought that these Florentines will end by coming to blows amongst themselves; but in that case I believe the Friar's party will have the best of it, inasmuch as two-thirds of the people are on the Friar's side" (Del Lungo, loc. cit., doc. i.–iii.).

At first, as we have said before, Alexander had no special reason to hate Savonarola; but when, early in 1495, he began to receive letters from Florence and Milan, describing the Friar as an audacious denouncer of the clergy and the Pope; when altered, exaggerated, and falsified versions of the Friar's discourses—already daring enough in their genuine form—were placed before his eyes; and when he was told that the Prior of St. Mark's was the sole support of the popular party, sole author of the popular hatred to the Medici and the League, Alexander's anger was roused and soon burst into flame. Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, brother to Ludovico, and his chief agent in Rome,[1] was he who blew most dexterously on this flame, from the moment that it was first kindled. Another of Savonarola's worst enemies was now in Rome, *i.e.*, the preaching Friar, Mariano da Genazzano, who had never forgiven the shameful defeat he had endured in Florence. He was one of the most active conspirators in favour of the Medici and against Savonarola, whom he assailed with the foulest calumnies. He always spoke of him as "*The*

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[1] *Vide* at doc. vii. of Prof. Del Lungo's work (above quoted) the letter from Ascanio Sforza, dated 15th of April, 1496.

Devil's Instrument,"[1] and maliciously harped upon all his invectives against the evil life of the clergy, and all his declarations of intending to go farther and speak more frankly at any risk. The Borgia dissimulated his anger on this head; but in reality it wrought him to fury. Rumours were already afloat concerning scandals of a kind that history often shrinks from recording, and it was openly asserted that another son had been, or was just about to be born to the already aged Pope, and that this would be his sixth or seventh child.[2] Accordingly we may imagine with what feelings he must have regarded the monk who inculcated morality from the pulpit, and fearlessly thundered against all transgressors.

The Borgia now set to work with characteristic astuteness. On the 25th of July, 1495, he addressed Savonarola in a brief of the mildest description, conceived in these terms: "To our well-beloved son, greeting and the apostolic benediction. We have heard that of all the workers in the Lord's vineyard, thou art the most zealous; at the which we deeply rejoice, and give thanks to the Almighty God.[3] We have likewise heard that thou dost assert that thy predictions of the future proceed not from thee but from God; wherefore we desire, as behooves our pastoral office, to have speech with thee concerning these things; so that being, by thy means, better informed of God's will, we may be the better able to fulfil it.[4] Wherefore, by thy vow of holy obedience, we enjoin thee to wait on us without delay, and shall welcome thee with loving-kindness."[1]

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[1] Further on we shall have to speak in detail of Frà Mariano's intrigues.

[2] Even the "Civiltà Cattolica" (the renowned Papal organ) is forced to acknowledge—in its issue of the 15th of March, 1873—that this sixth or seventh child (Giovanni) really existed during the reign of Alexander VI., between 1494 and 1499.

[3] "Inter ceteros vineæ Domini Sabaoth operarios te plurimum laborare, multorum relatu percipimus. De quo valde laetamur," &c.

[4] "Ut quod placitum est Deo, melius per te cognoscentes, peragamus," &c.

The subtle craft dictating this brief is shown by the way in which it appeals to Savonarola's sincerity, which was in truth of the greatest. But the character of the Borgian Pope was too well known to all men, and the Florentines were too keenly awake to the plots of the Arrabbiati, who had already attempted Savonarola's life by steel and poison, and now openly boasted of their friendship with Rome. Hence no one was deceived as to the purport of this extraordinarily gentle summons. All saw that the Pope designed either to have him murdered by the way, or, should that plan fail, to seize him and put him to death in the dungeons of Castle St. Angelo.[2] Consequently his friends hastened to beseech him not to stir from Florence, where his presence was more indispensable than ever, now that the departure of the French had brought so many fresh dangers on the Republic. The dilemma was one of serious difficulty for Savonarola; he had either to disobey the Pope's mandate, or risk falling a prey to his wrath and that of the Arrabbiati, who hoped to destroy the popular government by its preacher's death. At this moment he was only just recovering from a serious intestinal disturbance, by which his strength had been so much exhausted that, according to the physician's dictum, his life was in danger unless he would abstain from all preaching and study. A few days before he had already announced this to the people, saying that illness compelled him to suspend his sermons.[1] And indeed his exhaustion was written in his face, and all saw that he was barely able to mount the pulpit stairs. It is true that, on facing the people and beginning to speak, his vigour revived and made him appear even stronger and more impassioned than before. But this was merely a passing and almost fictitious excitement, frequently followed by a reaction costing him many days of utter prostration. He therefore decided to entirely abandon the pulpit and at the same time to submit to the Pope the just and well-founded reasons compelling him to delay his departure. But first of all he determined to bid his hearers farewell and give them the advice required in the present state of affairs. He foresaw the dangers overhanging the Republic, perceiving that it was not only imperative to be on the alert against the Arrabbiati, but likewise against the Medici, who were all the more dangerous because they were less feared.

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[1] Both this brief and Savonarola's reply to the same were very incorrectly printed. We have restored them to their true reading. *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxiii. and xxiv.

[2] As, at a later period Clement VII. treated Benedetto da Foiano, a brother of St. Mark's, who, by preaching Savonarola's doctrines during the siege of Florence (1529-30), had roused the people to fight for their freedom. On going to Rome this Friar was starved to death in one of the subterranean dungeons of Castle St. Angelo.

Accordingly, on the 28th of July, he delivered one of his terrible sermons. The Signory and all the magistrates attended mass in the Duomo that day, and Savonarola mounted the pulpit in a mood of profound sadness. He had to forsake his flock at a moment when the departure and treachery of King Charles had brought new perils on Florence ; when his enemies were making war upon him, so that his overthrow might lead to that of the Republic, and had dexterously contrived to convert the Pope into an instrument of their party strife. But if the Republic was to be assailed in his person, Savonarola saw very plainly that in defending himself he defended the whole people. Therefore, although almost too feeble to drag himself into the pulpit, once in sight of his flock, he looked on the expectant throng and felt braced to renewed effort.

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[1] "Prediche sopra i Salmi." Sermon xxiii. (delivered on the 24th of June), xxiv. (5th of July), xxv. (12th of July).

He began by speaking of the corrupt habits and scandals still prevailing in Florence. Gamblers, blasphemers, loose women, and other persons dedicated to unmentionable vices, still polluted the city by their presence. They had grown more reckless since the persecution of the Friar had begun, what might they not become when he was reduced to silence? Hence Savonarola did not spare them on this occasion. He urged the authorities to chastise them severely, even by death, if their practices could be checked in no other way. He reminded his hearers how, in consequence of Achan's sin, the wrath of God had been poured out on the whole Hebrew people, and could only be appeased by the death of the culprit. "Take heed, therefore, Florence, thou that wouldst be so pitiful, see in what way the Lord wrought! Art thou wiser than God? Art thou more merciful than God? Art thou more than God, thou? O Florence! thou wouldst be more clement than God; but thy clemency is madness, thy pity is cruel; do justice, I tell thee, on these nefarious crimes.[1] I tell thee, the Almighty God demands justice; it behooves thee to arise and seize one of these men and lead him forth and cry: this man deserves death. Otherwise, ye and your city will be endangered. Renounce dancing, renounce gambling, close the taverns. I tell thee, O Florence, now is the time to weep, not to make merry." These threats, however, were only uttered in order to terrify the people, since, in spite of his profound hatred for every form of vice, Savonarola never practically forsook his natural moderation, although often indulging in undue vehemence of speech.

He next turned to the subject of prophecy, declaring it to be needful to the salvation of the people and the Church, "the which is now made desolate by the corruption of its rulers and the lack of good preachers. The honest preacher should be ready to give his life for truth's sake, and to save his people; but where now are such preachers to be found? I tell thee that so long as matters proceed in this fashion, the Church will sink to lower depths of ruin, and Italy will have no respite. As I have already said unto ye, O clergy, ye have given birth to this tempest."

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[1] Both in this and other sermons Savonarola alludes to unnatural vices, then very prevalent in Florence, where philosophers and literati were accustomed to speak of them with cynical mirth, and quote the example of the ancient Greeks.

Again changing his theme, he then turned to politics. "To four things have I exhorted ye: To the fear of God, to peace, to the public welfare, and to the reform of the government, *i.e.*, to the Greater Council; now I have only to insist on these same." And thus, examining all subjects in turn, he drove them home by new arguments. Above all he urged the necessity of union, and suggested the appointment of officers of peace, "who should put an end to these names of *Bigi*, *Bianchi*, and *Arrabbiati*, which are the ruin of the city. . . . At all events, let the construction of the Council-hall be hurried forward, employing on it, if needful, the artificers of the Duomo, since their labour will be the most pleasing to the Lord. Let the council remain steadfast, and, becoming better and purer, be the sole hope, the sole strength of the people." It was on the same day and at this very moment that Savonarola proposed the law for the abolition of Parliaments to which we have already alluded, and pronounced his famous diatribe against all who still favoured those gatherings, saying: "They refuse to understand that the council is the supreme power, and must command in all things." He found no threats nor punishments severe enough for those men, knowing that the Parliament was the means to which the Arrabbiati in general, and the Mediceans in particular, intended shortly to recur, in order to overthrow the present form of government. Having thus impressed the people with the necessity of guarding against the coming danger, he offered a few other brief counsels and then hastened to conclude. He exhorted the Signory not to waste time continually on petty matters, as was too much the custom in Florence; but to limit their attention to affairs of importance and leave the rest to the minor authorities. He recommended them to encourage labour in all possible ways, "even should it be necessary to levy a tax on the guild of silk and wool." And finally he pronounced his farewell, saying: "My people, when I stand here, I am always strong; and if, when out of the pulpit, I could feel as when in it, I should always be well. But after descending these stairs I believe that my pains will return, and for this reason some time will pass before I see ye again, for I must needs wait a little to recover. Then, if still living, I will again begin to preach. But probably a month may elapse, unless your prayers should recall me sooner. During this time Frà Domenico will preach in my stead; then will I return, if still alive. But the welfare of Florence will be cared for in any case. However much the wicked may labour at their work, this seed shall bear fruit, for it is God's will. I might this day tell ye who be the authors of your perils; but I would do harm to no man, and ye will know their names when they are brought to punishment. I must now conclude, for I have preached so often, and laboured so hard, as to have shortened my life by many years, and am fallen very weak. Well, brother, what reward wouldst thou have? I would have martyrdom; I am content to endure it; I pray for it each day, O Lord, for love of this city."[1]

After delivering this sermon, Savonarola immediately sent his reply to the Pope on the last day of July, and his letter is a remarkable combination of dignified humility and noble frankness. Acknowledging that a monk's first duty was certainly to yield obedience to his superiors, he said that it was likewise permissible to bring forward such reasonable excuses as might sometimes retard his obedience, and quoted, on this head, the words addressed by Pope Alexander III. to the Bishop of Ravenna. He then continued as follows: "Most Blessed Father! My most ardent desire is to behold the shrine of the Apostles Peter and Paul in order to worship the relics of those great saints; and still more willingly would I have gone thither now that the Holy Father deigneth to summon to him his humble servant. But I am barely issued from a very serious malady, the which hath forced me to suspend both preaching and study, and still threateneth my life.

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[1] Predica of the 28th of July, "sopra i Salmi."

"Furthermore, I am bound rather to obey the benign purpose of the command than the mere words in which it is framed. Now, inasmuch as the Lord, by my means, hath saved this city from much bloodshed, and subjected it to good and holy laws,[1] there be many adversaries, both within and without the city, who, having sought to enslave it, and having been confounded instead, now seek my blood, and have frequently attempted my life by steel and poison. Wherefore I could not depart without manifest risk, nor can I even walk through the city without an armed escort.[2] Also, this newly reformed government, that the Lord hath been pleased, by my means, to give to Florence, is not yet firmly rooted, and is visibly in danger without continued assistance; wherefore, in the judgment of all good and experienced citizens, my departure would be of great hurt to the city, while of scant profit to Rome.[1] I cannot suppose that my superior would desire the ruin of a whole city, and therefore trust that your Holiness will graciously accede to this delay, so that the reform begun by the Lord's will may be brought to perfection, since I am certain that it is for the good of the same that He hath now raised up these hindrances to my journey.[2]

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[1] "Quum Civitatem a non mediocri sanguinis effusione et a multis aliis noxiis, mea opera, Dominus liberaverit, et ad concordiam legesque sanctas revocaverit, infesti facti sunt mihi, tam in civitate quam extra, iniqui homines."

[2] Luca Landucci, "Diario," p. 106: "And on the 24th of May, 1495, an attempt was made on Frà Girolamo's life in the street of the Cocomero, after he had been preaching."

"And should your Holiness desire greater certitude on the matters publicly foretold by me concerning the chastisement of Italy and the renovation of the Church, you will find them set forth in a book of mine that is now being made public.[3] I was anxious to have these predictions put in print, so that, should they be not fulfilled, the world may know me to be a false prophet. But there are other things of a more hidden nature that must still remain veiled, and which I may not as yet reveal to any mortal.

"Accordingly I beseech your Holiness to graciously accept my very true and plain excuses, and to believe that it is my ardent desire to come to Rome; wherefore, as soon as possible, I shall spur myself to set forth."[4]

To this letter the Pope made no reply; but, perceiving that it would be useless to insist any farther at present, sent an express message to Savonarola[5] to state that he accepted his excuses. So the Friar, having retired to his convent, studied his health, and only addressed occasional, short discourses to the brotherhood. He was replaced in the Duomo by Frà Domenico of Pescia, who did his best to expound his master's doctrines and imitate his style and mode of delivery, although unable to approach him in originality, energy, or eloquence.[1] Nevertheless the people went very gladly to hear him, for all loved the straightforward sincerity of his character, and knew that he acted as Savonarola's mouthpiece.

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[1] "Discessus meus maximæ iacturæ huic populo, et modicæ isthic utilitatis foret."

[2] "Dum hoc coeptum perficiatur opus, cuius gratia haec impedimenta, ne proficiscar, nutu divino accidisse, equidem certus sum."

[3] He here alludes to the "Compendium Revelationum."

[4] *Vide* Appendix (to the Italian edition), doc. xxiv.

[5] In his sermon of the 18th of February, 1498, Savonarola related the history of all the briefs received from Rome. And in mentioning his reply he says: "He (*the Pope*) accepted my excuses very graciously." *Vide* sheet 20–22 of Venetian edition, 1540.

But while everything was going on in this quiet and peaceful manner, suddenly, on the 8th of September, a new and unexpected brief arrived from Rome, addressed to the brethren of Santa Croce, the foes of St. Mark's, designating Savonarola as "*a certain Frà Girolamo*, a seeker after novelty, and disseminator of false doctrines."[2] "This man's wits have been so perturbed by the changes in Italian affairs," the brief continued, "that he seeketh to make the people believe that he hath a mission from God and holdeth discourse with God, although unable to prove this, either by miracles or the direct evidence of the Holy Scriptures, as the canonical law would prescribe. We have shown great patience towards him, in the hope that he would repent and retrieve his transgressions by making submission to us and desisting from that scandalous severance from the Lombard Congregation, to which our consent was extorted by the specious devices of certain monks." The brief wound up by referring the whole affair to Frà Sebastiano de Madiis, Vicar-General of the Lombard Congregation, ordering Savonarola to recognize the latter's authority, to go without delay to any place to which he might be summoned, and meanwhile *to refrain from every description of preaching, whether public or private.* The Convent of St. Mark was declared to be joined to the Lombard Congregation, and Frà Domenico, Frà Silvestro, and Frà Tommaso Busini were instructed to repair to Bologna within nine days. All this under pain of excommunication, *latæ sententiæ*.[1]

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[1] One of Frà Domenico's sermons is to be found at the end of Savonarola's "Prediche sopra i Salmi," and bears the date of the 29th of September.

[2] "And then, after some days had passed, *i.e.*, about the whole of one month and half of another, the before-mentioned brief having been issued towards the end of July, there came another brief dated about the 8th of September, full of vituperations, and including no less than eighteen blunders. And the first of these was, that the brief was addressed to the Monastery of Sta. Croce, and therefore went to Sta. Croce, whereas it was intended for St. Mark's. And it was further said in that brief: *Quemdam Hieronymum Savonarolam*, *i.e.*, a certain Jeronimo Savonarola, even as though he (the Pope) knew nothing of me, and had not written to me so affectionately less than a month and a half before! Then there were many other trifling errors, which honour forbids me to mention here; but by the many blunders in his briefs after so short an interval thou mayest see that the Pope has been misled" (Sermon of the 18th of February, 1498).

Why should the Pope have been so suddenly stirred to hostility after accepting the Friar's excuses? Why should a brief, solely concerning Savonarola and his brethren, have been addressed to the friars of Sta. Croce, the foes of St. Mark's? Undoubtedly for the purpose of increasing its publicity, and preventing its concealment. But the cause of the Pope's sudden change was only understood later. The dangers predicted in Savonarola's last sermon in July all came to pass, and the wisdom of his invectives against tyrants and Parliaments was clearly justified by Piero de' Medici's attempt. This indeed took place shortly afterwards, although its connection with other events compelled us to relate it in the preceding chapter.

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[1] Mons. Quétif, in publishing this brief, gave it the date of the 16th of October, 1497. We knew this to be wrong, and believed that it should be changed to the 8th of September, 1496. But since then, the fresh documents brought to light by Signor Gherardi have enabled us to ascertain the real date to be 8th of September, 1495, as given in Codex 2053 of the Riccardi Library, sheet cix. *Vide* Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," &c., p. 256 and fol.

Hence it was highly important to the Pope that Savonarola should be reduced to silence; but in order to prevent the discovery that his chief purpose was to aim a blow at the Republic, he gave the question the air of a dispute as to the junction or severance of certain convents, and left it to be decided by others. The Congregation of St. Mark's once dissolved, Savonarola's authority would be at an end, and should he leave Tuscany, in obedience to the commands of the Lombard Superior, he would speedily fall into Alexander's hands.[1]

Savonarola had understood all this from the first, and was deeply incensed by it; but his position was one of extreme difficulty. He was reluctant to complicate the matter by openly rebelling against the authority of the Pope, but was determined not to allow the Republic to be crushed without exciting the Florentines to resistance. He freely expressed these sentiments in a letter of the 15th of September of this year addressed to a brother of his Order in Rome, saying: "It is known to all the world that the charges made against me are false, and will bring great infamy on those prelates and the whole of Rome. I well know that my accusers have no just cause of attack, for verily they are stoning me for a good deed; but I dread them not, neither fear I their power, for the grace of God and a pure conscience suffice me. I know the root of all these plots, and know them to be the work of evil-minded citizens who would fain re-establish tyranny in Florence, and are agreed with certain Italian potentates. All these men seek my death; thus I can no longer go abroad without a guard of armed men. Nevertheless, if there be no other way of saving my conscience, I am resolved to make submission, so as to avoid even a venial sin. For the present I suspend judgment and take no hasty decision, following in this the precepts of the Fathers." [1]

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[1] "It was the Pope's desire to re-unite the said Congregation of Tuscany with the old and general Congregation of Lombardy, in order to remove this Friar from the city of Florence, and annul the Congregation of his followers and adherents; and all this had been brought about by the adversaries of the present government, and more especially by those who hoped that the city would turn in favour of the Holy League and the Medici House" (Nardi, vol. i. p. 124).

In pursuance of this intent he forwarded a detailed reply to the Pope on the 29th of September.[2] In this he lamented that his enemies should have succeeded in deceiving the Holy Father regarding events witnessed by the whole people. "As to my doctrines," he continued, "I have always been submissive to the Church; as regards prophecy, I have never absolutely declared myself a prophet, although this would be no heresy; but I have undoubtedly foretold various things, of which some have already been fulfilled, and others that will be verified at some future time. Moreover, it is known to all Italy that the chastisement hath already begun, and how solely by means of my words there hath been peace in Florence, the which failing all would have suffered greater woes." And hereupon he reminded the Pope that the brief ordaining the separation (of the convents) had not been extorted by a few friars, but at the request of all, and that it was only granted after long debate. "Then, as to leaving our case to the decision of the Lombard Vicar, this implies making our adversary our judge, since the quarrels between the two congregations are publicly known. What can have given birth to all this, Most Blessed Father, save the false accusations and lying reports of the enemies of this Republic, the which I have delivered from many dangers and restored to true religion and freedom, by destroying factions, reforming manners, and establishing peace? And besides," concluded Savonarola, citing the authority of many Fathers of the Church, "it is lawful for all to pass from one rule to another that is stricter and more severe. Our reunion with the Lombard friars at this moment would only deepen the rancour already, unhappily, existing between the two congregations, and give rise to fresh dispute and fresh scandal. And finally, inasmuch as your Holiness declares that you desire this union so as to prevent others from lapsing into my errors, and inasmuch as it is now most plain that I have not lapsed into error, the cause being non-existent, neither should its effect remain. Having therefore proved the falsity of all the charges brought against me, I pray your Holiness to vouchsafe a reply to my defence, and to grant me absolution. I preach the doctrine of the Holy Fathers, have departed in nothing from their precepts, and am ready, if I should be in error, not only to correct myself, but to avow it publicly, and make amends before the whole people. And now again I repeat that which I have always said, *i.e.*, that I submit myself and all my writings to the correction of the Holy Roman Church." At the same time Savonarola addressed many other letters to friends of some influence in Rome, repeating the arguments he had adduced to the Pope in his own favour, and most earnestly recommending his cause to all.

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[1] This letter was published by Mons. Perrens, to whom it had been given by Abate Bernardi, who had discovered it in a codex of the Marcian Library of Venice (class ix. 41), with the date 15th of September, 1496. But this date was changed by Mons. Perrens to that of 15th of September, 1495, and Gherardi has proved that he was right in so doing. It is true that in the old Codex 2053 of the Riccardi Library (sheet cxvi^t) the letter is dated 1496; but there is an added note to the effect that the letter should be placed directly after the brief of the 8th of September, 1495, and that its original date of 1495 had been afterwards erroneously altered to 1496.

[2] "Responsio Fratris Hieronymi Savonarolæ ad Alexandrum Papam sextum." This was wrongly dated 29th of September, 1497, by Mons Quétif. We judged it to be a blunder, and supposed that it should be changed to 29th of September, 1496. But Gherardi (in his before-mentioned work) proved that the real date to be assigned to it was that of 29th of September, 1495, as given in an anthentic copy of the brief itself. Other Codices bear different dates, but the real one is that now given.

With his usual acuteness and sagacity, Alexander VI. grasped the difficulty of the case, and hastened to proceed with an astuteness truly worthy of a whilom law student of Barcelona. Seeing that the Friar was resolved neither to dissolve his congregation nor depart from Florence; seeing that Piero de' Medici's preparations were going on, and that this was a most critical moment for the Republic, and considering that the sole object of any real importance to himself, at this juncture, was to exclude the Friar from the pulpit, he desisted from threats and recurred to flattery. Accordingly on the 16th of October another brief[1] was despatched, in which the Pope replied to Savonarola's letter as though rejoicing over the recovery of a strayed sheep. "In other letters," so he said, "we have manifested our grief to thee, regarding these disturbances in Florence, of which thy sermons have been the chief cause; forasmuch as instead of preaching against vice and in favour of union, thou dost predict the future, the which thing might give birth to discord even among a pacific people, much more therefore among the Florentines, in whom there be so many seeds of discontent and party spirit. These were the reasons for which we bade thee to our presence; but now that, by thy letters and the testimony of many cardinals, we find thee prepared to yield obedience to the Roman Church, we do greatly rejoice, feeling assured that thou hast erred rather from overmuch simplicity than from badness of heart. Wherefore we again reply to thy letters, and in virtue of thy vow of holy obedience command thee *to abstain from all sermons not only in public, but in private*, so that no man may say that after preaching in the pulpit thou hast been reduced to conventicles. And thou wilt persevere in this course until such time as thou mayest be able to seek our presence with greater safety and with honour—when we will receive thee in a joyful and fatherly spirit—or until we shall have come to a riper decision as to the course to be prescribed for thee, and appointed a suitable person to settle these matters. And if, as we doubt not, thou wilt obey, we shall then revoke all our preceding briefs, so that thou mayest tranquilly attend to thy spiritual welfare."[1]

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[1] To this brief also Quétif has assigned the date of 16th of October, 1497. We believed it to be wrong, and Signor Gherardi (p. 259) reproduces the original brief, discovered by himself, and dated 16th of October, 1495.

By good fortune this brief of the 16th of October was a long time on the way,[2] and thus Savonarola, while awaiting the reply to his letter, was enabled to occupy the pulpit during that month and deliver the three sermons to which we have referred, and which contributed so much towards the failure of the Medici expedition. But on receiving the ostensibly affectionate brief that wound up by condemning him to silence, his position became more difficult than before. He thoroughly comprehended that all this paternal suavity was a mere device to seal his lips at the moment when the Republic had most need of his words: it was a stroke of the Borgia's usual craft that was now understood by all. In fact the letters of the Florentine ambassador in Rome gave information that the Pope's anger was growing daily more violent, and that he was absolutely determined to seize the Friar's person. But, as we have seen, Piero de' Medici's expedition speedily failed, and there being no longer any pressing need for Savonarola to raise his voice in defence of the Republic, he held his peace so as to give his foes no fresh pretext for attack. In fact, during Advent in 1495 he never once ascended the pulpit, and Frà Domenico continued to take his place in Sta. Maria del Fiore.

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[1] "Later came another brief, saying that I had propagated doctrines fitted to sow discord among the most pacific people, and many other false things, and he therefore suspended me from preaching" (Sermon of the 18th of February, 1498).

[2] This is proved by the letters of the Ferrarese ambassador in Florence (Cappelli, Frà Girolamo Savonarola, &c.). *Vide* Prof. Cosci's work in the "Archivio Storico Italiano," Series IV., vol. iv. p. 306.

The mind of Savonarola must have been deeply agitated during those months of silence, and when still so enfeebled by disease. He saw that he was being forced into a struggle with Rome, to defend his doctrines against obviously calumnious accusations, and his life from the snares laid for him by party hatred. If he took thought for his own safety, he would have to neglect the political reforms already making such satisfactory progress, and the moral crusade that had already led to such happy results. This was precisely the end desired by his foes. As to the charges of being a heretic, a disseminator of scandal, a seducer of the people, and so on, they were not believed, even by those who brought them forward. The Pope, as we shall soon see even more plainly, had no fault to find with the Friar's teachings; but, together with the Arrabbiati and Duke Ludovico, attacked him on entirely personal and political grounds, in order to exterminate his party by his downfall. So long as the struggle wore its true aspect of a purely political conflict, Savonarola had always faced it with a bold front; but now the ground was being shifted, the political question cunningly veiled in the guise of a religious dispute, and he realized all the dangers and difficulties of his position. Had it been really a question of dogma, he would have submitted to the authority of the Church; but the Pope merely taxed him in general terms with the dissemination of false doctrines, and commanded him to hold his peace. Therefore he must either forsake the people, in order to obey commands, solely aimed at the destruction of Florentine liberty, or he must rebel against the papal authority, bring his own cause before the public, and thus breed scandal and dissension in the Church. He was deeply saddened by this, but unhesitatingly accepted silence, in the hope that a fresh attempt would be made by well-disposed magistrates and cardinals to bring the Borgia to a milder frame of mind. Indeed, Savonarola's letters at this period prove that he was then most firmly resolved never to return to the pulpit without permission from Rome.[1] But, notwithstanding his silence, he had no doubts regarding the justice of his cause. He wished to avoid rousing scandal in the Church, but could not recognize the validity of orders sent for political ends and inspired by his enemies' calumnious reports. The increasing iniquities of the Pope and his children, who were openly accused of incestuous intrigues, and of murders by poison, struck terror into all, and stirred Savonarola to irrepressible indignation. Accordingly, it was at this time that his theories as to the best mode of checking the evils oppressing the Church first took a definite shape. Many good and experienced Catholics maintained the opinion that Alexander's election was null and void, having been obtained, as all knew, by simony, and that the only way to put an end to the numerous scandals of which he was the cause, would be to summon a council to depose him. The leader of this party was the pugnacious Cardinal of St. Piero in Vincoli, afterwards Pope Julius II.[2]

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[1] *Vide* Savonarola's letter to Frà Antonio of Holland, to which we shall allude farther on. It is included in the Appendix to the Italian edition.

[2] Padre Marchese, "Storia di San Marco," p. 225 and fol.: "Julianus Robureus, Card. S. Petri ad Vincula, in Gallias aufugit, iram Alexandri veritus, cum celebrandum Concilium œcumenicum diceret, nimirum ad erigendam Ecclesiam a simoniacis conculcatam." Rainaldo *ad an.*, 1492. The said Cardinal, on being made Pope, issued a Bull (14th of January, 1505) in confirmation of the Lateran Council, declaring Alexander's election null, and incapable of convalidation, even by the subsequent homage of the Cardinals. *Vide* Padre Marchese, p. 226, note 1. The same writer remarks on this subject (p. 231), that since Alexander's election has had the continued approval of the Church, no Catholics can

He styled the Borgia an infidel and a heretic, and was constantly in waiting on King Charles, doing his utmost to induce him to assemble a council, and achieve the reform of the Church. Nor was the monarch opposed to the idea, for his ambassador, De Commines, frequently repeats: "A little more and this reform would have been carried out."[1] The first time the French passed through Rome, no less than eighteen cardinals joined Della Rovere in pressing the king to procure the desired reform. And on two occasions the French guns were pointed on Castle St. Angelo, for the purpose of seizing Alexander's person, and summoning the council by force;[2] but then, Charles, being always most hesitating when on the brink of a resolve, ended by taking the advice of Brissonet, who had great influence over him, and had received much favour and many bribes from the Pope.

None could be more anxious than Savonarola to urge on the council and procure the desired reform; and although he had sometimes hesitated to push the matter, for fear of raising scandal in the Church whose unity was his most cherished aim, the fresh infamies perpetrated by the Pope now put an end to his hesitation. Knowing that he might count on the sure support of the Cardinal of San Piero in Vincoli,[3] so long as he abstained from treating the subject in the pulpit, he continued to write pressing letters to King Charles, beseeching him to carry out the promised reforms.

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concur in the opinion of Julius II. But, he adds, although this opinion did not bar Cardinal della Rovere's path to the Papal Chair, it led the way to Savonarola's martyrdom.

[1] "Preschoit (Savonarola) que l'estat de l'Eglise seroit reformé à l'espée. Cela n'est pas encore advenu, mais en fut bien près, et encore le maintient" (Commines, "Mémoires," &c., bk. viii. chap. ii.).

[2] Marchese, p. 227; Guicciardini "Storia d'Italia," bk. i. chap. iv.; Rainaldo, *ad an.*, 1495, No. 1.

[3] We learn from the documents of Savonarola's trial that the Cardinal had occasionally sent him words of encouragement and incentive.

Three of the letters, in fact, which we find addressed to the king, *post amissionem regni neapolitani*,[1] were written this year, and lead us to suppose the existence of others. In these, as in the previously quoted missive of the 26th of May, Savonarola always speaks as a prophet of the Lord: "Remember," he says, "that I repeatedly announced your descent into Italy, when it was expected by none; I have predicted your success, predicted your perils. The Lord hath punished ye, because, deviating from His commands, ye have abandoned His work. And still heavier punishments await ye if ye return not to the right path. I tell ye, in the name of the Lord, that if your ways be not changed, if ye maintain not your sworn promises, if ye fail to perform that which hath been commanded ye through my lips, the Lord will revoke your election as the chosen minister of His will, and elect another in your stead." The death of the Dauphin,[2] a few months after this time, confirmed the bereaved monarch's faith in the truth of Savonarola's prophecies. But even this was not enough to put an end to the eternal hesitancy by which he seemed fated to disgust all the world.

Meanwhile Savonarola kept silence, devoted himself to study, and corresponded with his kinsmen who were then suffering from poverty and domestic trouble. These letters show that, like all men of true greatness, he was constant and unchanging in his family affections. He urged upon his brothers the necessity of aiding one another, since, for his part, having renounced the world, he could only help them by his words. Nevertheless he heartily shared in their joys and their sufferings.[1] On the death of his brother Borso he wrote a letter to his mother in which he pours out his tenderness for her who was the object of his dearest earthly love, and the confidant of his most secret thoughts.[2] This is a truly remarkable letter, not only on account of the delicate feelings expressed in it, but as a proof of the identity of this affectionate son with the impassioned preacher we have seen launching thunderbolts from the pulpit, in the presence of an excited throng. We find the same ideas, the same words; he is always mindful of his lofty prophetic mission; he addresses exhortations even to his mother on the godly life and the vanity of the flesh, and concludes by announcing the approach of his death. "I would that your faith were as that of the holy Jewish woman of the Old Testament, so that ye might be able, without shedding a tear, to see your children martyred before your eyes. Dearest mother, I say not this in order to comfort ye; but to prepare ye, lest I should have to die."

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[1] These, hitherto unknown, letters to which we have before alluded, are undated. They were discovered by us in the above-mentioned Codex 2053 of the Riccardi Library, together with the letter dated 26th of May, 1495. *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxv.

[2] Charles Orlande, who died in childhood, at the beginning of 1495.

About this time his health began to mend, and his need of activity revived with increased strength. But what was he to do? He would not return to the pulpit without permission from Rome, and Frà Domenico's sermons, although directed by himself, could scarcely obtain the same great results as his own. Nevertheless Savonarola always found some way of doing good, and, when unable to achieve much, contented himself with little. The Carnival of 1496 was now at hand, and the

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[1] *Vide* the letter to his brother Alberto, dated 28th of October 1495, included in the correspondence edited by Padre Marchese.

[2] We discovered this letter in the Magliabecchian Library, and communicated it to Padre Marchese, by whom it was published in the "Archivio Storico Italiano," Appendix viii., with the remark, that "even were all the writings of Frà Girolamo Savonarola perished or destroyed, this letter would be sufficient proof of the sincere and steadfast piety of his soul."

Friar being silenced, the Arrabbiati were preparing to celebrate it in the old Medicean style, in order to vent the unbridled passions and filthy lusts which, as they thought, had too long been repressed. And thereupon the Friar determined to thwart them even in this matter.

But it proved a harder task than might have been expected. The Florentines had always been much given to carnival festivities, and under the Medici, had indulged in these pleasures to an unlimited and almost incredible extent. During this holiday period the whole city was a scene of wild revelry; drunkenness and debauchery prevailed, and public decorum was cast to the winds. Savonarola's sermons had undoubtedly wrought a great change; but certain carnival customs were so deeply rooted, that neither new doctrines, altered laws, nor the severe prohibitions of the magistrates, had availed to extirpate them. And, as was only natural, the boys of Florence took special delight in these revels. They were accustomed, during those days, to continually stop people in the streets by barring the road with long poles, and refusing to remove them until they had extorted enough money to pay for their mad feastings by night. After these carousals they made bonfires in the squares, round which they danced and sang, and finally pelted one another with stones in so brutal a fashion that no year passed without some of the combatants being left dead on the ground. This *mad and bestial game of stones*, as the chroniclers style it, was frequently forbidden and the players threatened with the severest penalties; but none of these measures had the slightest effect. All the leading citizens, the Eight, even the Signory itself, had exhausted their efforts in vain. By nightfall the boys were so excited with the revels of the day that no penalty availed to keep them in check. At last Savonarola undertook the task. After the brilliant results achieved during the past years, in the reformation of politics and morals, and being prevented by the changed condition of affairs from continuing those important crusades, he planned a third and simpler reform, that he styled *the reform of the children.*

Foreseeing that it would be extremely difficult to entirely abolish the old customs, he decided to transform them by substituting religious for carnival gaieties. Accordingly, at the same street corners where the children formerly assembled to demand money for their banquets, he caused small altars to be erected, before which they were to take their stand and beg contributions, not, however, for purposes of self-indulgence, but for alms to the poor. Sing as much as ye will, he said to the boys, but sing hymns and sacred lauds instead of indecent songs. He wrote some hymns for them himself, thus returning to the poetical pursuits which he had so long forsaken; and commissioned the poet Girolamo Benivieni to compose other verses of the same sort. Then, that all might be conducted with due decorum, he charged Frà Domenico to collect all the children and choose some leaders from among them, and several of the latter waited on the Signory to explain the proposed reform. Having obtained the sanction of the government, the boys of Florence, exulting in their novel importance, eagerly undertook their appointed work. The city was by no means quiet even in this carnival, nor was it possible to walk the streets without molestation; but although the children were as importunate as of old, it was now for the charitable aim prescribed by Savonarola. And thus, in the year 1496, the game of stones was suppressed for the first time; there was no more gluttonous feasting, and three hundred ducats were collected for the poor. Then, on the last day of carnival, a grand procession was arranged, in which, attracted by the novelty of the thing, the whole population took part. The children went through the city singing hymns and entering all the principal churches, after which they handed over the sums collected to the "good men of St. Martin," for distribution among the "modest poor" (*poveri vergognosi*).[1] Some objections were raised by those who always murmured against every good work that proceeded from Savonarola; but the greater part of the citizens, and all worthy men, declared that the Friar had again achieved a task in which every one else in Florence had failed.[2]

By this time the Ten of War, or, as they were now entitled, the Ten of Liberty and Peace, being still composed of Savonarola's adherents, had succeeded in obtaining from Rome his nomination as Lenten preacher.[1] They had repeatedly addressed the Pope on the subject, and solicited many of the cardinals, and particularly the Cardinal of Naples, to induce him to revoke, were it only by word of mouth (*vivæ vocis oraculo*), the decree for Savonarola's suspension. And they had also written to Niccolò Pandolfini, Bishop of Pistoia,[2] and to Messer Ricciardo Becchi, the Florentine ambassador, saying: "You could do nothing that would be more grateful and welcome to all your fellow-citizens, or better appreciated by the good sense of this whole population."[3] Indeed it was apparently owed to the efforts of the Cardinal of Naples and others that the Pope's mood was somewhat softened; since, although no fresh brief revoking the decree of suspension was issued, these intercessors obtained leave for Savonarola to preach, in the hope that he would now adopt a more temperate tone towards Rome.[4] And so great was the anxiety of the Florentines to welcome him back to the pulpit, that on the 11th of February, 1496, the Signory unanimously decreed that he was to preach during the ensuing Lent.[5]

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[1] This carnival procession, the first organized by Savonarola, is left unmentioned by the biographers; but Paolo Somenzi gives a minute description of it in one of his letters to the Duke of Milan, saying that the children were 10,000 in number! This letter is dated 16th of February, and we give it in the Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxvi. Landucci speaks of the procession at page 125 of his "Diario," saying that on the 16th of February it was calculated that there were more than six thousand children of from five or six to sixteen years of age. At page 128 he mentions another procession on the 27th of March (Palm Sunday), in which five thousand boys and a great number of girls took part.

[2] The biographers have much to say of these recreations and the reform of the children. Nardi tells us: "Among other things it seemed specially remarkable how at this time was ceased and willingly dropped that foolish and bestial game of stones which used to be carried on during carnival, and was so inveterate and ancient a custom, that even the severe and terrifying edicts of the magistrates had never been able to repress, much less root it out" ("Istorie di Firenze," vol. i. p. 96). Savonarola himself considered that he had achieved great results in that carnival: "Thou knowest how in past times, neither the power of the magistrates, nor prohibitions and penalties, ever succeeded in putting down the evil custom of throwing stones during carnival, and how every year some were killed by it; but now a poor Friar, by a few words and prayers, hath put an end to it. Secondly, thou knowest that many sins were committed in carnival, and now even children go to confession, and this carnival hath been like unto Lent, the which must surely be the work of heaven. Thirdly, these children used to go about begging in order to buy staves and burn brooms, and feast and drink; but now they have collected more money for the poor, than thou with all thy wisdom wouldst ever be able to obtain" (First Lenten Sermon, 1496).

That the Pope was bent at this moment on conciliating Savonarola is indubitably proved by the fact that, precisely in the month of January, 1496, the Dominican convent of Prato, having fallen into a shamefully corrupt state, was annexed to the Tuscan Congregation, under the Prior of St. Mark's, who sent some of his monks to accomplish its reform. The affair was directed and carried out by the general of the Dominicans, Gioacchino Turriano, who was aided, or rather spurred to the task by the Signory.[1] A new prior was chosen for the Prato convent in the person of Frà Antonio d'Olanda, who immediately besought Savonarola to send him a preacher, and received the reply: "If permission be granted me to preach, I will send ye Frà Domenico of Pescia. Wherefore offer up prayers, and I trust we shall succeed."[2] Another event deserving public mention seems to have occurred just at this time, although no exact date is given by the many historians who relate it. The Pope had handed Savonarola's sermons to a learned Dominican bishop, hoping that the latter might discover them to contain some matter deserving condemnation; but after careful perusal the prelate returned the volume with the words: "Most Holy Father, this Friar says nothing that is not wise and honest; he speaks against simony and against the corruption of the priesthood, which in truth is very great; he respects the dogmas and the authority of the Church: wherefore I would rather seek to make him my friend, even, were it needful, by offering him the cardinal's purple." Whether the Pope was now beginning to fear this Friar who was not to be silenced, and consequently desired to conciliate him, or whether he was trying to set some new snare for him, it is undoubted that, by means of a Dominican, expressly sent from Rome for the purpose, a cardinal's hat was offered to Savonarola on condition that he would henceforth change the tone of his sermons. His astonishment on receiving, just at this moment, so unexpected an offer, and the indignation it aroused in him, are scarcely to be described. He now possessed evident proofs that Rome made a traffic of the holiest of things, and in the fulness of his wrath refused any reply at the time, merely saying to the bearer of the scandalous proposal: "Come to my next sermon, and you shall hear my reply to Rome."[1] Such were the auspices under which Savonarola began his Lenten course of 1496, the most daring that he had hitherto delivered. Accordingly a minute account will be given of them in the following chapter.

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[1] Appendix (to the Italian edition), doc. xxvii.

[2] These letters are comprised in Gherardi's "Nuovi Documenti," p. 63 and fol.

[3] Letter of the 26th of January, 1496, included in the "Documenti" published by Padre Marchese.

[4] This is mentioned by Burlamacchi, and in the "Vita Latina;" and additional proof of it is also to be found in one of Pandolfini's letters to the Ten (24th of March, 1496), published by Padre Marchese, "Documenti," p. 149.

[5] The debate is given in Gherardi's "Nuovi Documenti," p. 65.

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[1] The whole story of this junction of the Prato convent with that of St. Mark is explained by Comm. Cesare Guasti in Gherardi's "Nuovi Documenti," pp. 29–61.

[2] *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxviii.

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[1] This fact is not only corroborated by the testimony of the "Vita Latina," sheet 28^t, and Burlamacchi, page 85, but is also narrated by Bzovio ("Annales," an. 1494), by Fontana and Souveges, and declared to be beyond doubt by Padre Marchese, Meier, Perrens, &c. Savonarola himself made several allusions to it in his sermons and writings. "I desire neither hats nor mitres, be they great or small; I desire nought save that which thou hast given to thy saints; it is death; a crimson hat, a hat of blood that I desire." *Vide* his "Prediche delle Feste," 1496, Predica xix. And in other sermons he frequently said: "Had I cared to accept dignities, thou knowest well that I should not now wear a ragged cloak;" and in his dialogue, "De veritate prophetica," chap. 5, he clearly confirms the fact that he had been frequently tempted not only by threats, but by numerous promises. The authenticity of the fact is therefore beyond dispute, nor is it contradicted by any of the biographers. There is merely some uncertainty as to the date. It seemed best to mention it at this point, because the Lenten discourses immediately following seem to us to contain the reply indirectly given to Rome; nor is it possible to assign any other date to the affair.

CHAPTER III.

SAVONAROLA RETURNS TO THE PULPIT AS LENTEN PREACHER IN 1496.

THE 17th of February, 1496, was a memorable day in Savonarola's life. He reappeared in the pulpit overflowing with grief and indignation. After having battled through an increasingly hard struggle with the Court of Rome, he was now granted, as it were, a covert permission to preach, and at the same time an endeavour had been made to seduce him by the offer of a cardinal's hat. He clearly saw that his contest with the Pope was daily becoming fiercer, and that the latter sought to have his blood. Doubtless, had he alone been concerned, he would have willingly given his life for the peace of the Church; but, in destroying him, it was also intended to destroy the Republic, of which he was the universally recognized and principal support. Consequently he must defend himself in order to defend the religion and freedom of an entire people, who by his means had expelled their oppressors and restored Christian faith and morality. Certainly, none could doubt the truth of his religious doctrines; neither the Pope who dangled the cardinal's crimson before his eyes, nor the Arrabbiati who hated him as an uncompromising reformer of morals, and could not brook the excessive rigour of his piety. Nevertheless they had joined, as we have seen, in veiling the political question under the guise of a religious dispute, in the hope of thus being able to vanquish him with greater facility. They were determined to silence at all costs the voice that had dared, in the midst of corrupt and Pagan Italy, in face of a Pope whose crimes and lusts inspired terror in all, to uphold political freedom and Christian virtue. And now, strong in his own good conscience, Savonarola came prepared to make a daring defence, and to champion his cause before the whole world.

The crowd flocked with redoubled eagerness to hear again the voice that the thunderbolts of Rome had for long months kept silent. As the floor of the Duomo was insufficient for the multitude, a lofty amphitheatre with seventeen rows of seats was erected against the wall of the nave. It rose to the level of the lower windows, and was occupied by the children of Florence, now prominent members of Savonarola's congregation, and to whom his words were frequently addressed. The Signory had been obliged to adopt many precautions to prevent the disturbances planned by the Friar's opponents. His life, in fact, was perpetually in danger, for the Arrabbiati were evidently determined to kill him the first time they could take him by surprise in the streets. It was also known that Duke Ludovico had sent hired assassins to attack him; accordingly the guards of the Eight and some of the Gonfaloniers of the Guilds patrolled the city to maintain order.

No sooner had the Friar issued from his convent than the shouts and joyful cries of the expectant people rose to the sky, and he was immediately surrounded by a large body of well-armed friends to protect him from insult on his way to the Duomo. On that day all men's passions were strung to a high pitch. It was the most solemn moment of Savonarola's life; he had never seen an audience so thirsting for his words; he was about to touch on a most serious theme, and knew that his sermon would be instantly reported to the Pontiff, to whose tempting baits he had this day promised a reply. On appearing in the pulpit, he stood erect and cast a firm glance round the church, while his eyes flashed like burning coals. The crowd was packed so closely that no man could stir, the silence so great that one could almost hear the preacher's hurried breathing as he laboured to control his agitation. Presently, calming himself with an effort, he quietly began his discourse in the shape of a dialogue.

"How is it, O Friar, that thou hast tarried so long in idleness, without coming to the camp to thy soldiers' aid? —My children, I have not been in idleness; on the contrary, I come from the camp, and have been defending a stronghold, the which, had it been captured, you also might have been destroyed; but now, by God's grace and through your prayers, we have saved it. . . . Come, brother, didst thou perhaps fear to be killed?—No, my children, certainly not; for had I been afeared, I should not have come here, where I am now in greater peril than before.—Then, dost thou not scruple to preach?—Not I. —But why not? We hear that an excommunication hath been sent, and that thou hast been forbidden to preach.—Hast thou read this excommunication? Who hath sent it? But even if it were so, rememberest thou not how I told thee that even if it came, it would be useless and of no avail to these wicked men full of deceit? . . . What then hath happened? Friar, thou keepest us overmuch in suspense. Now I will tell ye all, if ye will hearken with patience.

"I have said and bethought me: before proceeding, *custodiam vias meas*; that is, I will look to my ways, if they be pure of all contamination. Beholding so much opposition from so many parts against a poor man who is not worth three farthings, I have said in my heart: peradventure thou hast not looked well to thy ways, and therefore thy tongue hath betrayed thee; and I have looked to my ways one by one. I have chiefly examined them as to faith, for with grammar and logic have I no more concern; and certes, as regards faith my ways are wholly pure; for I have ever believed and do believe all that is believed by the Holy Roman Church, and have ever submitted and do submit myself to Her.[1] . . . I have written to Rome, that if peradventure I may have preached or written any heretical thing, . . . I am willing to amend me and to retract my words here in public. I am ever prepared to yield obedience to the Roman Church, and declare that whosoever obeyeth her not shall be damned. . . . I declare and confess that the Catholic Church will surely endure to the day of judgment; . . . and inasmuch as there be divers opinions as to the real definition of this Catholic Church, I rely only on Christ and on the decision of the Church of Rome."[2]

After this explicit declaration, by which the orthodoxy of his belief is placed beyond doubt, he touched on the more daring part of his doctrines. He then said that although the Church be infallible as to points of dogma, that by no means implies that we are bound to obey every command of our superiors or even of the Pope himself. "The superior may not give me any command contrary to the rules of my order; the Pope may not give me any command opposed to charity, or contrary to the Gospel. I do not believe that the Pope would ever seek to do so; but were he so to do, I should say to him, Now thou art no pastor, thou art not the Church of Rome, thou art in error.[1] For I would even say, Whenever it be clearly seen that the commands of superiors are contrary to God's commandments, and especially when contrary to the precept of charity, no one is in such case bound to obedience, for it is written, *Oportet obedire magis Deo quam hominibus*. . . . But if the case were not clear, or there were the slightest doubt, then we must always obey." These premises established, he proceeds to touch on his own case, saying that he cannot hold himself bound to obey any one who would remove him from Florence, inasmuch as all the inhabitants, even the women, know that his removal is desired solely from motives of political hatred, and that it would bring injury, not only to liberty, but to religion. "Were I to clearly see that my departure from a city would be the spiritual and temporal ruin of the people, I would obey no living man that commanded me to depart, . . . forasmuch as in obeying him I should disobey the commands of the Lord; and likewise because I should presume that my superior had no intention to do evil, but had been misled by false reports. O thou that st write~~th~~ so many lies to Rome, what wilt thou write now? I know well what thou wilt write.—What, O Friar?—

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[1] Sermon of the 17th of February. *Vide* "Prediche di Frate Hieronymo da Ferrara. Impresso nella Ciptà di Firenze ad instantia di Ser Lorenzo Vivuoli l'anno MCCCCLXXXXVI (1497) a dì octo di Febbraio." Other editions were published in Venice in 1514, 1519, 1539, and 1543, but contain many mutilations, as, for example, that of 1514.

[2] The two latter passages, *i.e.*, that beginning with the words, "*I have written*," and the other with "*I declare and confess*," occur in the last of these Lenten sermons, delivered in Easter week (*ottava di Pasqua*). We give them at this point, in pursuance of our usual method of arranging as much as possible in their proper categories the ideas scattered through the sermons, to prevent over-frequent recurrence to the same topics. In the first and last of these sermons on Amos and Zechariah, Savonarola repeated several times his submission to Rome, always referring to the subject in almost identical words.

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[1] These ideas are not only expressed in the sermon of the 17th of February and that given in Easter Week, but throughout all the Lenten series, of which, indeed, they are, as it were, the basis and foundation.

Thou wilt write that I have said that one need not obey the Pope, and that I will not obey him. I say not so: write that which I have said, and thou shalt see that it will not be suited to thy purpose."[1] In fact, the doctrine expounded by Savonarola was entirely Catholic, and differing in no respect from that laid down by St. Thomas Aquinas and many doctors and fathers of the Church; nevertheless it was of a kind that, by a few verbal alterations, might easily be made to appear heretical; and this was precisely what his enemies attempted.

Resuming the thread of his discourse, he proceeded to say that, having examined his ways and found them to be clean, since his doctrine had always been in conformity with the Church; and although convinced that the briefs sent from Rome were invalid, inasmuch as they were solely inspired by lying reports, and opposed to the law of charity, he had nevertheless resolved to be prudent, and had therefore held his tongue so far, and had intended to remain silent. "But, when I perceived that many of the righteous were growing lukewarm, the wicked gaining strength, and the work of the Lord being overthrown, I boldly decided to return to the pulpit. First of all, however, I sought the Lord, saying: I was rejoicing in my peace and tranquillity, and Thou drew me forth, by showing me Thy light; and thereupon I became even as the moth that, tempted by the light, doth burn its wings. O Lord, my wings of contemplation are consumed; I have embarked on a stormy flood, assailed on all sides by contrary winds. I would fain reach the port, yet can find no track; would fain repose, yet find no resting-place; would fain remain still and silent, but may not, for the word of God is as a fire in my heart, and unless I give it vent, will consume the marrow of my bones. Come,

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[1] Sermon i., "sopra Amos e Zaccaria."

O Lord, since Thou wouldst have me steer through these deep waters, let Thy will be done."

Savonarola ended his sermon by first addressing a few words to the young, whom he believed to be nearly all good, and then to the old, in whom he had much less confidence. "In ye, O young men, is my hope and the hope of the Lord. The city of Florence will be well governed by ye, because ye have not the evil tendencies of your fathers, who know not how to free themselves from tyrannical rule, nor understand the greatness of this gift of liberty that the Lord hath bestowed on the people.

"But as for ye, old men, ye pass your days in evil speaking at clubs and in workshops, and in your letters ye send forth many lies from Florence. Wherefore many say that I have thrown Italy into disorder; and this hath been charged against me in writing, even in official documents. Oh, ye fools! *Quis vos fascinavit non obedire veritati?* Where are my hosts and my treasure with which to disturb Italy? Not by me is Italy disturbed, but I foretell that she will be disturbed.

"I foretell that the scourge will be hastened by your sins. Thou unbelieving one, a mighty war shall strip thee of thy pomp and thy pride. A mighty pestilence shall make ye cast aside your vanities, O women; as for thee, thou murmuring populace, thy tongue shall be stilled by a great famine. Citizens! unless ye live in the fear of God, and love of free government, the Lord shall bring sorrow on ye, and only fulfil to your children His promises of happiness to Florence."[1]

Thus finished the sermon in which Savonarola had given an epitome of all that he wished to express throughout Lent. His doctrines are daring, his charges against Rome are audacious, the words in which he describes the coming scourge are words of fire; but he says nothing that can be accused of heresy. We ought rather to admire the prudence with which he always refrained in the pulpit from any mention of Borgia's simoniacal election, or of the hope of a council, and avoided all open allusion to the offers received from the Pope, to which he only indirectly replied. The magnanimity of his nature forbade his taking advantage of a fact, that, however useful to himself, would have spread scandal in the Church. During the whole of Lent we find Savonarola constantly worthy of himself; essentially catholic, but at the same time with an amount of moral courage and independence such as few have possessed either before or after his time, fearing nothing in the world, allowing nought to check his progress. He is the sole defender of the people's freedom, of the freedom of his own reason and his own conscience; nevertheless he holds his standard aloft in the pulpit, and firmly confronts all the princes of Italy and the ill-advised thunders of Rome. Neither does he fear the poison and steel of the Arrabbiati, who are threatening his life on all sides—in the highways, in Church, and even in the pulpit.

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[1] Sermon i., "sopra Amos e Zaccaria."

During the whole of Lent he was unceasing in his terrible denunciations against the vices of Rome, and the false, hypocritical religion of the day. The second Sunday he delivered a sermon on this subject that has become famous, less for its audacity, which was not unusual, than because it was one of those interdicted by the Roman Court.[1] He began by giving a strange interpretation of the following text: "Audite verbum hoc, vaccæ pingues, quæ estis in Monte Samariæ." "Well, then: who be those which say that I should preach the Holy Scripture? . . . I preach nothing else. If thou knewest what is the Holy Scripture thou wouldst not speak thus. Rather thou shouldst have said: preach Tullius or Virgil, and then I should not have tested thee; but the Holy Scripture will test thee at all points. Well! I will preach the Scripture, I will obey thee. Tell me, how wouldst thou interpret these words?—O vaccæ pingues. . . . For me these fat kine signify the harlots of Italy and Rome. . . . Are there none in Italy and Rome? One thousand, ten thousand, fourteen thousand are few for Rome; for there both men and women are made harlots." And pursuing this strain, he describes the vices of Rome in terms scarcely to be repeated at the present day. He then turns to the people, accusing them of a false and hypocritical religion, only taking satisfaction in material things. "Ye are corrupt in all things, in your speech and your silence, in that which ye do and that which ye leave undone, in your belief and your unbelief. Ye speak against prophecy; and behold there cometh one to tell ye a strange dream, and ye have faith in it. He telleth ye: fast on a certain Saturday, at a certain hour, and ye fast, and believe ye are saved. I tell ye that the Lord willeth not that ye fast on such a day or at such an hour, but willeth that ye avoid sin throughout all the days of your life. Instead, ye are good for one hour of the day, in order to be bad all your life. Observe the ways of these men during the last three days of Holy Week. See how they go about seeking indulgences and pardons! Come here, go there, kiss St. Peter, St. Paul, this Saint and that! Come, come, ring bells, dress altars, deck the churches, come all of ye, for three days before Easter, and then no more. God mocketh your doings, heedeth not your ceremonies, . . . for, Easter passed, ye will be worse than before. All is vanity, all hypocrisy in our times; true religion is dead."[1] And elsewhere: "How is it that if I were to say: give me ten ducats for one in need, thou wouldst not give them, but if I tell thee: spend a hundred for a chapel here in St. Mark, wouldst thou do it? Yes! in order to have thy coat of arms placed there, for thine own glory, but not for the glory of God. . . . Look through all convent buildings, and thou wilt find them full of their founders' armorial bearings. I raise my head to look above a door, thinking to see a crucifix, and behold there is a shield; I raise my head again a little further on, and behold there is another shield—armorial bearings everywhere. I don a vestment, thinking that a crucifix is painted on it; but arms have been painted even there, the better to be seen by the people. These, then, are your idols, to which ye make sacrifice?"[2] Then, after describing and condemning the corruption of the times, and especially of the clergy, he always repeats his predictions of the coming chastisement of Rome and of Italy.

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[1] This sermon was excised from nearly every copy of these Lenten discourses, but it is to be found in one or two copies in the Magliabecchian Library, and in one belonging to the Convent of St. Mark.

"Prepare thee, I say, for heavy shall be thy chastisement, O Rome! Thou shalt be girdled with steel, put to the sword, to fire and flames. . . . Wretched Italy! how I see thee struck down; wretched people! how I see ye all oppressed![3] . . . Italy, thou art stricken with a grave disease. . . . Thou, Rome, art stricken with a mortal malady, *usque ad mortem*. Thou hast lost thy health, and hast forsaken the Lord; thou art sick with sins and tribulations. . . . If thou wouldst be healed, forsake feasting; forsake thy pride, thy ambition, thy lusts, and thy greed: these be the food that have caused thy sickness, these that bring ye to death. . . . Italy laugheth at this, Italy maketh mock of it, refuseth medicine, sayeth that the physician raveth. . . . O ye unbelieving ones, since ye will neither hearken nor be converted, thus saith the Lord: Inasmuch as Italy is all full of sanguinary deeds, . . . full of iniquities, harlots, and miserable panders, I will overwhelm her with the scum of the earth; will abase her princes, and trample the pride of Rome. These invaders shall capture her sanctuaries, and defile her churches; and inasmuch as these have been made dens of vice, I will make them stables for horses and swine, the which will be less displeasing to God than seeing them made haunts of prostitutes. When trouble and tribulation draw nigh, men will have no peace; they will seek to be converted, without being able; they will be confused and bewildered. . . . Then, O Italy! trouble after trouble shall befall thee; troubles of war after famine, troubles of pestilence after war; trouble from this side and from that. There will be rumours upon rumours, now rumours of barbarians on this side; then rumours of barbarians on that. Rumours from the east, from the west; from all sides rumour after rumour. Then men will yearn for the visions of the prophets, and will have them not, for the Lord saith, 'Now do I prophesy in my turn.' Men will lean on astrology, and it will profit them nothing. The law of the priesthood shall perish, and priests be stripped of their rank; princes shall wear haircloth; the people be crushed by tribulation. All men will lose courage, and as they have judged, so shall themselves be judged."[1]

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[1] Sermon of the second Sunday in Lent.
[2] Sermon of the Saturday following the second Sunday in Lent.
[3] Sermon of Easter Week.

In another sermon we find the following description of the plague that was to come upon Italy: "Believe ye this Friar, that there will not be enough men left to bury the dead; nor means to dig enough graves. So many will lie dead in the houses, that men will go through the streets crying, 'Send forth your dead!' And the dead will be heaped in carts and on horses; they will be piled up and burnt. Men will pass through the streets crying aloud, 'Are there any dead? Are there any dead?' Then some persons will come forth and say, 'Here is my son, here is my brother, here is my husband!' . . . Again will they go through the streets crying, 'Be there no more dead here?' And the people shall be so thinned that few shall remain." [1]

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[1] Sermon of the fourth Sunday in Lent.

Savonarola continued throughout Lent to preach in this strain. He first described the sins of Rome and of Italy, then announced the scourge, and always ended by calling the people to repentance. "*Heu! Heu! fuge de terra Aquilonis.* Fly from the land of Aquilon (the north)—*i.e.*, from vice, and return to Christ. . . . Behold, the sky shall be darkened; behold, it will rain fire and flames, stones and rocks; it will be wild weather. . . . I have placed ye between four winds, saith the Lord—namely, between prelates, princes, priests, and bad citizens. Fly from their vices, gather ye together in charity. Fuge, O Sion, quæ habitas apud filiam Babilonis. . . . That is, fly from Rome, for Babylon signifies confusion, and Rome hath confused all the Scriptures, confused all vices together, confused everything. Fly, then, from Rome, and come to repentance." [2]

This continued description of the woes of Italy is, in truth, so graphic and vivid, that Savonarola seems almost transported into the future by his own fancy, and to see all these things with his own eyes. No less extraordinary is his persistency in announcing the approach of his own end, and in always reiterating: "Not yet hath the day come for ye to wreak your will on me, *sed adhuc modicum tempus vobiscum sum.*[3] . . . I have said unto the Lord:

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[1] Sermon of the Tuesday after the third Sunday.

[2] Sermon of Wednesday after the fifth Sunday in Lent. In all these extracts we have faithfully given Savonarola's exact words, but have omitted some of his many repetitions and plainer grammatical blunders.

[3] *Vide* the sermons of the Wednesday after the third Sunday in Lent, of Easter Tuesday, and many others of the series.

I leave Thee to take thought of this deed; I am but as a tool in Thy hand. And He hath answered: Leave all to Me. It will be with them even as it was with the Jews, who thought to destroy Me by nailing Me on the cross, and instead did make My name known throughout the earth. Therefore," concluded Savonarola, "like unto a good captain, I will fight even unto the death."[1]

But although still in an attitude of resistance, although still refusing to bow to the Pope's will, the latter had succeeded in putting him on his defence. Up to this moment he had spent his life in directing and spurring the multitude, infusing into it his ideas and his will, and continually enlarging his field of action; but now, to the serious hurt of the people, his circle of activity was narrowed: he was obliged to think of defending his own doctrines and his own life. His enemies were multiplying on all sides, and had resolved that even if the Republic remained standing, its founder at least should perish; and they were already closing in round the poor Friar. He was defending himself against their attacks with increased energy; was proclaiming to Italy and the whole world that they were trying to destroy the Republic by his death, to overthrow the inviolable rights of the human reason and human conscience; but meanwhile he was gradually being forced to relinquish the reformation of morals and politics. His position was essentially changed, daily becoming more difficult, and encompassed by greater dangers.

Nevertheless he did not leave politics entirely aside this Lent, since an opportunity occurred of recurring to the subject for several days. The new hall of the Greater Council was just completed at this moment. Its construction had been entrusted, in the first days of the new

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[1] Sermon of the Monday after the fourth Sunday in Lent.

Government, to the famous architect, Cronaca, but the work was very slackly carried on until Savonarola began to urge him to haste in his sermons. He then brought it on with so much speed that the people declared that angels must have had a hand in it. On the 25th of February a new Signory was elected by a great meeting of the councillors.[1] Gladdened by this solemn event, Savonarola devoted two of his Lenten sermons to political topics.[2] He dwelt upon the mode of conducting elections, and sternly condemned the party spirit always influencing them in Florence. "There be many that go about the city scattering notices to the effect that this or that man should not be elected. I tell ye: Never obey the suggestions of those papers. If those whom ye would not have elected be bad, ye may openly proclaim it in council, now that there is no tyrant to oppress ye. Wherefore come forth, and say frankly, Such an one is not fit for this office. But if he be a good man, let him be chosen."[3] Elsewhere he says: "I am told there be some in the council who, when one is about to be balloted, say of him, Let us give him the black or white bean, because he is of this or that party. *Et quad peius est*, I am told there be many that say, He is one of the Friar's men, let us give him the black beans.[4] What! have I taught you thus?

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[1] Rinuccini states, in his "Ricordi Storici," p. clix., that 1,723 members were present, although many failed to attend. But there must be some mistake here. Just before it (p. clvi.) he had stated that there were 3,200 citizens *eligible* to the council, of which number only one-third were elected for a term of six months at a time. It is true that many magistrates were admitted to the council in right of their office, and that a few young men were also admitted before attaining the age prescribed by law. But even including these, the number could not have amounted to 1,723.

[2] The 24th and 25th of February.

[3] Sermon of the 25th of February.

[4] In Florentine elections, as we have already explained, the black bean signified a favourable, the white an unfavourable vote; accordingly, to whiten a candidate (*partito*) signified to vote against and reject him; and even at the present day the same phrase is in general use.

I have no friend save Christ and the righteous. Act no more in this wise, for this is no purpose of mine, and ye would soon cause dissensions. Let electors give their beans to those they conscientiously hold to be good and sagacious men, as I have frequently told ye before."[1] And we would here remark that Savonarola, as he is seen in his sermons, his writings, and in the real history of events, is a very different man from the Savonarola depicted by many of his biographers, both ancient and modern. Where do we find the party spirit that, according to some, was the sole motor of his actions? Where the desire to exalt his own friends at others' expense? Where the narrowness, where the lack of magnanimity attributed to him? We find him, on the contrary, to be a man of lofty ideas, most noble principles, purely disinterested, and desirous of liberty and justice for all, even including those who were seeking his death.

On this important occasion, after having insisted at length on the necessity of conducting the elections without party spirit, he urged the citizens to be steadfast to their Greater Council, their new Government, and their liberty. And, in order to heighten the attachment of the people to the present state of things, he gave in either sermon a long description of tyrants, and the evils brought by them on cities subject to their yoke. "The term of tyrant," he said, "signifieth a man of the worst kind, who would grasp all for himself, give nothing to others, an enemy to God and to man. The tyrant is proud, lustful, and avaricious; and as these three vices contain the germs of all others, it follows that he hath the germ of every vice of which man is capable. Likewise all his senses are perverted: his eyes by looking on wantonness; his ears by hearing flattery of himself and censure of other men; his palate by the vice of gluttony, and so forth. He corrupts magistrates, robs widows and orphans, oppresses the people, and favours those that incite him to defraud the Commune. He is devoured by suspicion, and has spies everywhere; he desires all to seem bashful in his presence, and be his slaves; hence, where there is a tyrant, no man may act or speak freely. In this wise the people become pusillanimous, all virtue is extinguished, all vice exalted. Behold, O Florence, thy fate, if thou wouldst have a tyrant. He is the cause of all the sins committed by the people; wherefore he will be called to render account of them to God, and will bear the penalty of his misdeeds. Thou, O citizen, that followeth the tyrant, thou art no less miserable than he. Thy tongue is enslaved when addressing him, thy eyes when regarding him, thy person is subject to him, thy goods at his disposal; thou art beaten with rods, and must yet give him thanks! Thou art debased in all ways. And such," he said in conclusion, "are the miseries of the tyrant and his followers, the which miseries weigh them down in this life, and bring them to eternal perdition in the next."[1] This description was repeated by the preacher in the minutest detail,[2] with a complete exposition of the life and passions of a tyrant and of his various acts of oppression. It was an appalling and terrible picture, not only painted in vivid colours, but often with truly artistic skill. And Savonarola persistently displayed it to the eyes of the people, and always concluded with these words: "Behold, O Florence, that which thou seekest." Nor was he speaking at random. On the 27th of April a plot was discovered, by which it had been designed to tamper with the votes and procure the election of the enemies of the Republic. Accordingly, three of the ringleaders were sentenced to perpetual imprisonment, and many citizens publicly reprimanded (*ammoniti*).[1]

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[1] Sermon of the second Sunday in Lent.

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[1] Sermon of the 25th of February, 1496.

[2] He had already given an equally eloquent description of the same kind in his treatise "Sul Governo di Firenze."

During this Lent, Savonarola also addressed the children, a great number of whom occupied seats in the great amphitheatre raised in the Duomo. He exhorted them to charity and to diligence in study; he was anxious that all should know at least the elements of grammar, and charged their parents to grudge neither expense nor labour to that effect. He also urged them to avoid assuming the ecclesiastical robe at too early an age, and gave them other good advice.[2] Then, Palm Sunday being at hand, he arranged a very edifying and solemn procession for the children. The election of the officials of the Monte di Pietà had just then taken place, and being an earnest promoter of that institution, Savonarola desired that its inauguration should be celebrated by the children.[3] Accordingly, early in the morning of Palm Sunday, a tabernacle was erected in church, decorated with a painting representing Jesus Christ riding into Jerusalem on an ass. Savonarola then preached a sermon full of wise counsel to the assembled children, ending with these words: "O Lord, from the mouths of these little ones shall thy true praises proceed. Philosophers praise thee according to the light of the world, these little ones according to the light of heaven; philosophers praise thee from self-love, and these from simplicity; philosophers praise thee with their lips, and these with their works." Then turning to the multitude, and raising the crucifix in his hand, he said: "Florence, behold! this is the lord of the universe, and would fain be thine. Wilt thou have him for thy king?" Thereupon all assented in a loud voice, and many with tears, crying: "Long live Christ our King!"[1] Savonarola then left the pulpit amid the enthusiastic cries of the people and the murmurs of the Arrabbiati, who, although standing aloof at some distance, carefully kept him in view. In the afternoon the children, all in white robes with olive wreaths on their heads, and red crosses or palm branches in their hands, carried the tabernacle in procession through the town, and having visited all the churches, halted on the Piazza to sing a song composed by Girolamo Benivieni on the future felicity of Florence.[2] Then, having gleaned a good harvest of coin, they gave it to the Monte di Pietà. Thus the institution was brilliantly inaugurated by the urchins, who, under Savonarola's guidance, had forsaken carnival gaieties and devoted themselves to good works.[3]

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[1] Those sentenced to imprisonment in the *Stinche*, as leaders of the plot, were Filippo Corbizzi (the man who had called the meeting of theologians in the Palace for the purpose of accusing Savonarola), Giovanni Benizi, and Giovanni da Tignano. According to Rinuccini, page clx., the Signory, after hearing the verdict of the Colleges, of the Eight of Balia, and the Ten of Liberty, sentenced them to ten years' confinement and perpetual exclusion from all public offices. According to Landucci, however, page 130, the three ringleaders were condemned to confinement for life, and twenty-five others reprimanded (*ammoniti*).

[2] Sermons of Saturday following the first Sunday, and Monday after the third Sunday in Lent.

[3] "I hear that the officers of the Monte di Pietà have been elected: should be well pleased that this undertaking should begin well. The children shall march in procession in honour of this, . . . and it shall be arranged at what point a collection of money should be made" (Sermon of the Wednesday before Palm Sunday). He repeated the announcement in other sermons during this week, and throughout Lent frequently spoke in favour of the Monte di Pietà.

But with the exception of the two sermons respectively given on the days of the opening of the Greater Council and of the Monte di Pietà, no political nor social questions were treated in the rest of this Lenten series. Savonarola continued to preach in the same strain in which he had begun, and on the eighth day after Easter, gave a last discourse, recapitulating and winding up all the subjects announced in the first of these Lenten sermons. In fact these two sermons contain all the principal ideas that he purposed to expound at that time, and, on the last day of Lent, Savonarola again declared his entire submission to the authority of the Roman Church, saying that the Church would stand firm for ever, and that whoever should leave her fold would be eternally lost. He acknowledged the authority of the Pope in the words of the New Testament: "Thou art Peter, and on that rock will I build my church; and that which thou bindest on earth shall be bound in heaven." But after this he again repeated: "Nevertheless we are not compelled to obey all commands. When given in consequence of lying reports, they are invalid; when in evident contradiction with the law of charity laid down by the Gospel, it is our duty to resist them, even as St. Paul resisted St. Peter. We are bound to presume that no such commands will be imposed on us, but in case they were imposed, we must then reply to our superior, saying: Thou dost err, thou art not the Roman Church, thou art a man and a sinner." These were the identical words he had used in the first sermon. And in repeating them he now quoted many authorities in support of his ideas, and elucidated them by many examples. "If my superior command me to forsake poverty, I resist; if thy confessor give thee a command that is contrary to God's will, thou must resist and condemn him: for when the matter is quite plain, we should fear nothing, and persevere in the right path." But although justified by the verdict of the Fathers, these ideas were held to be very audacious, and in fact they were equivalent to a war cry. Even Savonarola might have hesitated to proclaim them from the pulpit, had he not been convinced that Pope Alexander's election was null, and had not cherished a strong hope that a council would soon be called to remedy the woes of the Church, and put an end to the abominable scandals, infamies, and crimes by which she had so long been profaned.

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[1] *Vide* the Sermon given on Palm Sunday.

[2] "Viva ne nostri cor, viva, O Fiorenza." It is printed among Savonarola's poems in the Florence edition of 1847, pp. 17–20. It is also given, with a commentary, in the "Poesie" of G. Benivieni: Florence, 1500.

[3] Burlamacchi, p. 110 and fol.; "Vita Latina," &c. *Vide* the sermon given on the Wednesday before Palm Sunday, and on that Sunday itself. This event is also mentioned by the chroniclers, among others, by Landucci, at p. 128.

Then, as to the individual case of his dispute with Rome, he again said on that day: "Do not all know that the brief was sent to favour those enemies of the Republic and myself who spread lies and calumnies concerning me? Do not all know that my departure hence would not only place my life in the utmost jeopardy, but also be very injurious to this people and the cause of freedom? For would not good morals be cast aside, and religion overthrown? This and none other is our enemies' desire. Thus I can only suppose that the Pontiff hath been deceived by my detractors' lying reports; and therefore I prefer to obey that which I hold to be his real intent: I cannot suppose that he seeketh the ruin of an entire people." And he again repeated the prophecy of his own doom: "What will be the end of the war thou art carrying on? If thou wouldst know the general result, I tell thee it will end in victory; but if thou wouldst know what will be its result as regards myself in particular, I tell thee it will end in death and being cut to pieces. Rest assured, however, that all this will serve to spread abroad this doctrine, the which proceedeth not from me, but from God. I am but a tool in His hands; wherefore I am resolved to fight to the death." He then related how, on the preceding night, he had beheld a vision in which he seemed to see a crucifix arise betwixt Rome and Jerusalem. From this poured a river of blood, in which unbelievers appeared very eager to plunge, while Christians entered it almost reluctantly. Then darkness covered the earth, and there was a rain of fire and lightning accompanied by a terrible uproar. Hereupon the orator made this vision the text for another of the eloquent and vivid descriptions of the scourges of Italy, in which these Lenten discourses abound, and thus brought the series to an end.[1]

Many pages of these sermons afford excellent proofs that, under different circumstances and with a different course of study, Savonarola would have been the greatest of Italian orators. His impetuous utterances burn with a fire of new and genuine eloquence. His language is thoroughly original, for even in the very manner in which his ideas are conceived he has a special style of his own; his forcible imagery seizes the fancy, and almost takes it by storm. And if we remember his singular vigour of gesture and accent, we shall be able to understand the enormous enthusiasm he aroused in the people of Florence. In fact, the impression produced by him this Lent far exceeded that of the preceding years. The fame of these sermons on Amos and Zechariah was noised throughout Italy, and even beyond the Alps. On the one hand the enthusiasm of his followers was increasing to fanaticism, while on the other the hate of his adversaries was nearing its climax. The potentates of Italy raised cries of protest; the Pope was burning with fury, and it seemed as though the Vatican itself were shaken by the thunders of the Friar's eloquence. His courage in daring to assert the irresistible might of charity, of liberty, of justice, of faith, and of reason, and still more to cry it aloud in defiance of the threats of a Pope stained with infamy and bloodshed, was truly unprecedented, and, by awakening an echo wherever the sentiment of goodness still survived, threw men's minds in a turmoil. But of the different passions raging on all sides we must speak in the following chapter.

[1] Last sermon of the Lenten course on Amos and Zechariah.

CHAPTER IV.

VARIOUS WRITINGS CONCERNING THE WORKS OF SAVONAROLA. LETTERS ADDRESSED TO HIM BY DIFFERENT POTENTATES, AND HIS REPLIES. THE FLORENTINE AMBASSADOR'S INTERVIEW WITH THE POPE. SAVONAROLA RETURNS TO THE PULPIT AND PREACHES ON FESTIVAL DAYS ON TEXTS FROM RUTH AND MICAH.

(1496.)

FOR the due comprehension of the effect of Savonarola's sermons it would be necessary to read the letters written in Florence at that period.[1] The Florentines seem to have been positively unable to think of anything excepting the Friar, and equally unable to confine themselves to truth. Some write that he (the Friar) scoffs at the bull of excommunication that has just arrived;[2] that he speaks of the Pope as worse than a Turk; the princes of Italy as worse than heretics: others assert that he intends to reveal from the pulpit all the crimes of his persecutors, and that he is about to prophesy still more marvellous things. Some say that he has become the tyrant of Florence; others, on the contrary, that he will soon reduce the enemies of the Republic to sad straits, even if he does not destroy them altogether in some miraculous way. And thus with the exaggerations of hatred and deceit on the one hand, and of admiration and fanaticism on the other, men's minds became more and more disturbed, and they had continual fresh food for their passions.

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[1] Many of these letters are in the Manuscript Miscellanies of the National Library of Florence. See, among others, Class xxxvii., Cod. 288.

[2] "I can tell thee that Frà Girolamo says many bold things. Among the rest, he has received a decree of excommunication, yet makes a mock of it, as thou knowest he has often done. "Lettera di Roberto Giugni a Lorenzo Strozzi alle Selve," 18th of March, 1495 (Florentine style). See the above-mentioned "Miscellanea," at sheet 108.

At the same time the press was deluged by such a swarm of strange pamphlets as to threaten the land with a new and fantastic literature. And here, too, while some of these publications exalted the Friar's name to the skies, others found no words, accusations, nor insults strong enough to assail him. Although, as regards literary merit, these compositions are almost unworthy of notice, they so vividly pourtray the circumstances and men of the time, that it is necessary to devote a few words to them. One of the most noted of these pamphlets, entitled the "Oraculum de novo sæculo,"[1] by Giovanni Nesi, a somewhat celebrated disciple of Marsilio Ficino, was full of Neo-Platonic ideas. The mere title of the work proved the author to be a follower of Savonarola. It contained an account of a remarkable vision he had beheld, in which, finding himself transported to the other world, he carries on a long conversation with the shades of Eneas and Plato, and describes the latter as the precursor of Christianity. He then meets the celebrated Pico della Mirandola, who, guiding him through the heavenly spheres, shows him how Savonarola's doctrines are verified therein. During this celestial excursion Pico extols the Friar's intellect, character, and heart, and concludes by saying: *Sed quid plura? Christi est in omnibus æmulator egregius.*

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[1] This pamphlet was dedicated to Pico della Mirandola the younger. It was written in September, 1496, and published *ex archetypo ser Laurentius de Morgianis anno salutis*, 1497. One copy of it is in the National Library of Florence. Nesi was the author of several sermons, tractates, and devotional essays.

A preacher in the church of Santi Spirito now assailed the new doctrine, daily hurling insults at Savonarola and challenging him to the ordeal by fire.[1] Savonarola despised the man and paid no attention to his attacks; but Messer Filippo Cioni, a Florentine notary, replied to him with an "Epistle," and Maestro Paolo da Fucecchio published a pamphlet in defence of the Prior of St. Mark's.[2] Another adversary, in order to inflict a deeper wound on Savonarola, feigned to be one of his supporters, and published a letter repeating in the form of doubts all the usual accusations, namely: of disseminating scandal in the Church, disobeying Rome, assuming to be a prophet, and so on.[3] Domenico Benivieni, brother to the poet of the same name, and author of a great number of religious compositions, immediately wrote an "Epistle" unmasking the coarse hypocrisy of this anonymous assailant, and afterwards produced numerous dialogues and tractates in defence of his master's doctrines and prophecies.[1] He gave in these a complete history of the Friar's career as a preacher; described the state of corruption and unbelief, from which the Florentines had been rescued by means of the new doctrine; showed that the truth of this doctrine was proved by the righteousness of all its followers and by its perfect accordance with the precepts of Scripture ; and, enumerating the Friar's numerous predictions, wound up by noting those which were already fulfilled or in course of fulfilment.

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[1] This was Frà Leonardo, an Augustine monk. "Here is what the preacher of Santo Spirito told us yesterday morning: that we were deceived in Frà Girolamo; and that if he would enter the fire for one quarter of an hour, he himself would undertake to stay in it for two. And he likewise exhorted all present that they should pray and beseech God, that in case anything said by the above Frà Girolamo be true, the Lord send a judgment on him (Frà Leonardo), and strike him dead." Another of Giugni's letters, dated 12th of March, 1495 (Florentine style). See the before-quoted "Miscellanea," sheet 109.

[2] This pamphlet was reprinted by Quétif in his "Aggiunte" to the "Life of Savonarola." It contains all the accusations made by the hostile preacher, the replies of Maestro Paolo da Fucecchio, and has Cioni's "Epistola" as a preface. There is nothing in it of any importance, excepting the curious point that Maestro Paolo, relying on the Council of Constance, maintains that the authority of councils is superior to that of the Popes. But he does not pause to discuss the subject.

[3] "Epistola responsiva a Frate Hieronimo da Ferrara dell' ordine dei frati predicatori da l'amico suo." It was printed in the fifteenth century, but without any date. There is a copy of it in the National Library of Florence.

During the heat of this discussion a certain Frà Angelo, an anchorite, began to send forth from his hermitage in Vallombrosa a series of printed epistles to the different Italian States. In one addressed "Ai Signori e popolo di Firenze," he repeatedly confirmed the promises Savonarola had made, and claiming to have been specially inspired by the Holy Scripture, declared that he had discovered in the Apocalypse a prediction of the descent of Charles VIII. into Italy and of his expedition to the East to re-establish the Christian Empire; and stated that he had written to announce these coming events to the Churches of Asia and Africa. In another epistle addressed "Al Senato e Doge di Venezia" he said that he disapproved of their policy and that of the League, since the latter in opposing Charles opposed the will of the Lord, who had appointed the monarch to this *new enterprise.*[1]

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[1] "Tractato in defensione et probatione della doctrina e prophetie predicate da Frà Girolamo." Florence, May 28, 1496. This tractate is in fifteen chapters ; it contains a full account of Savonarola's preachings, and many of his visions and prophecies. "Dialogo di M. Domenico Benivieni, canonico di San Lorenzo, della verità della dottrina di Frà Hieronymo," undated. This dialogue enumerates many printed and manuscript pamphlets concerning the Friar and his works ; among others one by Bartolommeo Scala : "Contro i vituperatori del nuovo governo (a Latin copy dated Florence, 11 *Kal. Octobris*, 1496, is in the National Library). A lengthy "Trattato, con lettere ai principi," by Frà Paolo Nolano ; an "Epistola invettiva a proposito della lettera a Carlo VIII.," &c. Benivieni's reply to the feigned disciple is entitled, "Epistola di M. Domenico Benivieni a uno amico, responsiva a certe obiectioni et calumnie contro a Frate Hieronymo da Ferrara."

Benivieni also wrote a great number of other epistles, sermons, dialogues, and religious tracts, one of which deserves mention on the score of its singularity. The "Scala spirituale sopra il nome di Maria." The five letters forming the name are used as the initials of five mottoes, representing the five steps of this Stairway (*Scala*), of which the author speaks. Thus Benivieni wasted his time! Not to swell the list of these productions *ad infinitum*, we need only include one by Pico the younger : "Defensio Hiero : Savonarolæ adversus Samuelem Cassinensem," per Jo. Franc. Picum Mirandulanum, ad Hieron. Tornielum. Anno, 1615, in Metropoli quà Francia mixta Suevis. This pamphlet, which is not identical with the later Apologia by the same author, is in the Guicciardini Collection, together with an older and undated edition.

This anchorite, inditing from his hermitage calculations of the respective forces of Turkey and France, and discussing the probabilities and consequences of war in the East, was a truly singular phenomenon! All Florence was now absorbed in politics; every one full of designs for the future; men of all parties had now taken up the pen. In fact, political pamphlets were beginning to multiply faster than ever, for in this way the Arrabbiati vented their passions and their irrepressible hatred for Savonarola, whom they sought to injure by every possible means. The Eight daily discovered fresh plots against the Friar's life, and were frequently obliged to put some of the conspirators to the question; while more than once, it is said, the crime was so close on accomplishment that its would-be perpetrators had to be sentenced to death.[2] But even this failed to cow the Arrabbiati; on the contrary, their courage was unabated, and when foiled in their murderous attempts they had recourse to the pen. This indeed was their only weapon, now that, in consequence of the briefs from Rome, the Friar had withdrawn to his cloister. Accordingly numerous epistles in verse and prose, sonnets, songs, ballads, and compositions of all kinds, were employed to heap contumely on his head.

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[1] One of the letters addressed to the Signory of Florence was written in June, 1496; another in January, 1497, was in reply to some who had said, "Have we not enough of friars without also being tormented by anchorites?" The epistle to the "Senate and Doge of Venice" was also written in January, 1497. The greater part of the pamphlets mentioned in this chapter are contained in the National Library, and registered in the last catalogue of the fifteenth century writers, drawn up by Morolini Some are also included in the Guicciardini and Capponi collections in the same library.

[2] *Vide* Giugni's letter of the 18th of March, to which we have already referred.

A certain Girolamo Muzi wrote a ballad beginning with these lines:

O popolo ingrato,
Tu ne vai preso alle grida,
E drieto a una guida
Piena d'ipocrisia.[1]

Not content with attacking Savonarola, these men also turned against the magistrates, and censured their conduct.

Che i ducati e i marroni,
Le some dei capponi,
Giovenchi, han si gran forza,
Che rompono ogni scorza
Ch' è innanzi alla giustizia.[2]

And he continued in so insolent a strain, that the Eight prohibited him from holding any office for five years, and fined him sixty gold florins.[3]

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[1] O ungrateful people,
Thou art caught by a cry,
And follow a guide
All full of hypocrisy.

[2] For ducats or chestnuts, oxen or loads of capons, have strength to burst the rind of justice.

[3] This *indecent ballad* (*frottola inonesta*), as it was styled by the Eight, was never published; but the author gave several copies to a friend, charging him to send one to Savonarola, affix one on the door of the Duomo, another on the Palace of the Signoria, and others in various places. A copy of the ballad, together with the sentence of the Eight, dated 16th of January, 1496 (Florentine style), is in the Florence Archives. It has been published in the "Giornale storico degli Archivi Toscani," vol. ii. p. 81.

But the best idea of the scurrilities employed by the Arrabbiati is to be gained from the "Defensione contro all' Arca di Frà Girolamo" of Francesco Altoviti.[1] The author claims to have suffered exile and every kind of persecution from tyrants, to be specially devoted to liberty, and now moved to attack Savonarola in defence of its cause. "It would seem," writes Altoviti, "that this man is so blinded and inflamed by vice, so dominated by pride, that even as he has falsely asserted to have discoursed with the Almighty, so he believes that he is to have the power of a dictator over the State and its forces, in order to give laws to the city and even to the whole world, like unto Moses, and to compel the pontifical power to accept them by force of threats." He laments that the Friar should have abolished the festivities of St. John's Day, destroyed the carnival, and put an end to all gaiety in Florence; and then, being at a loss what to say next, adds, "He wishes to play the tyrant, and though he has sometimes spoken against tyranny, has now lowered his tone, because Piero has become his friend." "And now there is no doubt but where Frà Girolamo is, there too is Piero de' Medici, and those who desire Frà Girolamo desire Piero de' Medici likewise. Wherefore, in order to extinguish thoroughly the name of the tyrant, it is needful to extinguish the name of the Friar, for he is the father of the tyrant, and the officer of the tyrant," and so on. What greater absurdity could be imagined? Yet, this was the language daily used by the Arrabbiati.

It must be acknowledged that neither were the Frateschi uniformly pacific; they, too, occasionally vented their bile, as may be seen by the following verses:

Voi ridete, e con sonetti
Dispregiate il divin verbo;
Ma, spectate il duro nerbo
Che le spalle vi rassetti.

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[1] A fifteenth century copy, undated, is in the National Library.

Su, mosconi, a scompigliare;
Scarafaggi, a vostra stalla;
Calabron che siete a galla,
Fate i vizii un po' svegliare
Ma sappiate che mai falla
La iustizia col supplicio.[1] . . .

These compositions were sometimes issued in the shape of pamphlets, sometimes as fly sheets, circulated among the people from hand to hand, or affixed to street corners. More often, however, they were in the form of verses which were sung about the city and shouted by the Piagnoni and Arrabbiati at one another whenever they met in the streets. But the political character of Savonarola's adherents is not to be learned from the writings in which they returned insult for insult. It will be best ascertained from the still greater number of compositions in prose and verse in praise of the name and grandeur of the Florentine nation, and in which new laws and reforms are proposed, and the nature of those already established is discussed.

Mention may here be made of a few short tracts addressed to Savonarola and his community by Frà Santi Rucellai. They are entitled "Sul Cambio," "Sul Monte Comune," and "Sul Monte delle Fanciulle,"[2] and, in treating of some of the chief institutions of the Florentine Republic, also afford much valuable information on the financial condition of the city at that time.[3] But the writings of greatest value, as giving life-portraits of the Friar's adherents, were produced by men of the people,

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[1] With laughter and verse ye mock at the divine word, but wait till the hard lash straightens your backs. Buzz then, ye bluebottle flies; crawl, ye blackbeetles; whirling hornets, use your venomous stings! But remember that justice and chastisement, will never fail ye. . . . These verses were printed, and are in the National Library. See the fifteenth century writers, "Custodia" G., No. 14.

[2] "On Exchange," "On the Communal Bank," "On the Maidens' Bank."

[3] These unpublished tracts are in the National Library, Cl. xxix., Cod. 207. That on Exchange is the least important; the second explains the institution of the Communal Bank, which, as all know, was a bank for the

voluntary or forced loans contracted by the Republic in case of war or other emergencies under promise of repayment. "Very soon, however," says Frà Santi Rucellai, "the government ceased to refund the capital, paying instead 5 per cent. interest. Then the interest was reduced to 3 per cent., and now this 3 per cent. is sometimes paid, sometimes not." Things went from bad to worse. At first a bank-bond (*luogo di Monte*) of 100 florins could be realized for 80, then for only 66 or 50; I have seen its value sink to 30, to 25, and to 20 florins, and now since this last war, it is only worth 10 per cent. Incredible though it seem, this was the state of the Florentine Republic during the war, of which we shall have to speak in the ensuing chapter.

The third treatise is on the Maidens' Bank, a very ingenious institution of the Republic, and one that was highly valued by the Florentines. It was founded in the following manner. When the Republic found itself unable to redeem its debts to the citizens, it endeavoured to find a way of reconciling public with private interests, and accordingly founded this Monte delle Fanciulle. This was the point of view taken: If a bank-bond of 100 florins can only realize 16, evidently its holder's capital is only 16 and not 100 florins. Now, any person depositing one of these bonds in the Maidens' Bank, and leaving it there without interest for sixteen years, shall receive at the end of the sixteenth year the sum of 100 florins in full. Thus, by the deposit of ten bank-bonds, a dowry of 1,000 florins could be formed, and so on in proportion. In order to obtain a dowry of 100 florins at the end of twelve years it was necessary to deposit bonds to the effective amount of twenty-four instead of sixteen florins. The Commune appointed special officers to determine the market value of the bonds, for this underwent daily variations, and, on learning in how many years the dowry would be required, fixed the amount to be paid. This arrangement was advantageous to private individuals, and very profitable to the government, since, if the maiden for whom the dowry was constituted chanced to die, the bank retained the deposit, and, if the girl took the veil, the bank was only bound to pay the real value of the deposit.

The bonds issued by the Maidens' Bank were always held sacred, and were scrupulously redeemed by the Communal Bank. Nevertheless, in the course of the last war (1496) the finances of the Republic were in so exhausted a state, that when a dowry fell due, only one-fourth of the promised capital was paid in cash, and even from this the expenses of the contract were deducted; while the rest of the sum was retained at an interest of 7 per cent. By this measure even the bonds of the Maidens' Bank were reduced in value, and were then sold for the first time at 75 per cent. The continual variations in the value of the bonds of the Communal Bank gave rise to a speculative mania similar to modern speculations on the stock exchange, and its fatal consequences are frequently lamented by the historians.

who, regardless of grammar, only wrote from spontaneous impulse and for their own satisfaction. One of these works, which may serve to give us a notion of the rest, was entitled "Riforma santa et pretiosa ha fatta Domenico Cecchi, per chonservazione della città di Firenze." The author begins in this way: "By the great love I bear to this people, I have taken it into my head to write this work, and can do nothing else; for day and night I feel impelled to the task, and could tell of such miracles wrought on me by it, that I myself am amazed thereat." Cecchi is a true type of the fanaticism that Savonarola's sermons had roused in the people: politics and religion are strangely jumbled in his brain; he reasons as one constrained by a superior power to offer advice to the Republic, and is overflowing with enthusiasm, natural talent, and devotion to freedom. His pamphlet shows complete ignorance of the first rudiments of literary art, joined to remarkable political sagacity; his suggestions give evidence of rare common sense, and we might suppose them to be based on a consummate experience of public affairs. He proposes that the Greater Council should be relieved from the duty of attending to numerous minor details, inasmuch as these not only take time owed to things of greater moment, but serve to prevent many from attending the meetings.[1] He writes on the "Decima," and shows the enormous advantage of a single tax of this sort, severely condemns arbitrary imposts,[2] since, as he justly says, "our city is being crushed by them." He approves of the tax on church property,[1] and would like to see a limit imposed upon dowries, "since then no gentleman nor artizan would be prevented from marrying his daughter."[2] In this book we find the first suggestion of the citizen militia, afterwards founded by Machiavelli, and which so heroically aided in the defence of the Republic. Cecchi argues, in fact, that certain officers should be elected to give a military training to all able-bodied men within and without the walls. "For thus, besides the advantage of the pay-money circulating among the citizens, be assured that one thousand of our own men will do better work than three thousand foreigners. By these laws," he says in conclusion, "bad men will be made good, and all Florence dwell in happiness. Likewise, in a short space of time, these (citizen soldiers) will give reform, peace, and unity to all Italy, since all will come to learn here, this city being the centre and core of Italy."[3]

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[1] This mode of burdening the council and the Signory with petty affairs was noted and censured by all the Florentine historians of the period. We find, for instance, that in the month of March, 1495, the Greater Council was twice summoned to vote a bill, in order that two citizens might be granted permission to change their abode from one quarter of the town to another. Florence Archives "e Provvisioni," Register 187, sheets 10 and 11.

[2] As before noted, the "arbitrio," was levied, almost hap-hazard on the supposed profits of the different trades and professions, and, consequently, to the injury of all. The clergy were exempt from this tax.

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[1] With his usual regard for justice, Savonarola was in favour of the taxation of church property. The "Provvisione" of the 8th of December, 1495, entitled "Officialium Presbiterorum Ordinatio," imposed a minimum tax of 50,000 florins on all those exempted from ordinary burdens, that is to say on the clergy. See also Landucci's "Diario," p. 119.

[2] The author fixes a maximum for marriage portions. "At the highest, no one should give a dowry of more than 500 broad florins; artizans, of 300; peasants, of 50; those exempt from taxation, of 100."

[3] The National Library has no copy of this very rare pamphlet, and we first heard of it from the learned Englishman, Mr. Seymour Kirkup, who had a valuable library of Italian books and manuscripts. It consists of twenty-eight sheets, and in the last of these is a note to the effect that the pamphlet was completed on the 24th of February, 1496 (Florentine style). It was "printed by Francesco di Dino, and most diligently corrected by Domenico, son of Ruberto, son of Ser Mainardo Cecchi." The *title* of the work is also noteworthy as bearing the true Piagnone stamp: "Jesù, a holy and precious Reform proposed by Domenico, son of Ruberto, son of Ser Mainardo Cecchi, for the preservation of the city of Florence and the common weal: and this is the good and true light and treasure of every one and of the city, and will cause justice to be observed and virtuous government. And take good note of everything, for this is the true and right path, by which all may attain to great happiness, and afterwards in a brief space all Italy and the whole universe likewise,

We may conclude this review of popular literature by ranking with Cecchi's prose the verses of an author signing himself: *I, Giovanni, neither noble nor gentle, but a Tailor of Florence.*[1] He is as enthusiastic as Cecchi for the Republic, is inspired by the same patriotic zeal, and, although a man of small learning, writes less ungrammatically and with fewer orthographical blunders. In one of his sonnets he attacks those who, although always seeking office, refuse to serve their country in moments of danger, and extols others who have joined in the campaign against Pisa. In another sonnet his reproofs are directed against the Bigi, who hypocritically feign themselves Piagnoni; and he warns them that they will not succeed in their intent:

> O prete, o frate, o secolare strano,
> Sia chi vuol, che non terrà la bocca
> Al popolo fiorentino alto e sovrano.
> Che chi al popol vorrà porre il freno,
> Cadere lo vedrò in un baleno.[2]

He wrote some octaves in praise of patriotism and obedience to the Greater Council, several *terzine* to the future glory of Florence, and others censuring the policy of Duke Ludovico, the Venetians and the rest of the League, and threatening the Pisans with speedy defeat:

> Però bisogna che il Pisano cali
> Co' ferri a' piedi giù nella sentina,
> Po' ch'è stato cagion di tanti mali.
> E la famosa patria fiorentina

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as they may learn from this book." The Kirkup Library was dispersed some years ago. Another copy of the Cecchi pamphlet is in the possession of Signor O. Tommasini of Rome, and is quoted by him in his "History of Machiavelli."

[1] "To. Giovanni non sere nè messere, ma sarto fiorentino." We discovered these verses in the National Library, and have published them in the Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxix.

[2] Neither priest, nor friar, nor stranger layman, be he who he will, shall curb the jaws of the high and sovereign people of Florence. For were one to try to bridle the people, he would surely be overthrown in a flash.

In alia stae come bel falcone,
E la Lega niente la domina;

. . . .

Però non creda nessun sottoposto
Uscire delle branche al gran lione.
E chi lo ingannerà, tornerà tosto,
A sub dispetto, sotto il suo artiglio,
Come Cristo superno ha ben disposto.[1]

On examination of these and many other writings which were then in general circulation we are instantly struck by the immense difference between Arrabbiati and Piagnoni. Whereas the Friar's adherents are entirely honest and sincere, his adversaries are full of exaggeration, calumny, and deceit, and have no belief in their own words. Also, if setting aside the writings of the Arrabbiati, we turn our attention to those of the Piagnoni, we shall find them to be divided into two distinct classes—the political and the religious. There is an immense distance between the one and the other, not only on account of difference of subject, but in their tone and manner of diction. Men of the people discuss politics, men of learning religion; the former are quite unlettered; the latter know Latin and Greek, Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy. Nevertheless, as regards intrinsic worth, the writings of the people are decidedly the best. In fact, all these different pamphlets were the outcome of either political or religious energy. Whereas the first flourished in Florence, like a tree grown in rich and congenial soil which quickly sends forth luxuriant shoots, the other, fostered by Savonarola with the greatest tenderness, resembled a plant set in barren ground, and only kept alive by unremitting care and attention.

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[1] Wherefore the Pisan must be loaded with chains and cast into the pit, since he has caused us such mighty ills. And the famous land of Florence shall soar on high like unto a beauteous falcon, and the League shall have no power over it. . . . Yet let no subject (land) think to escape from the lion's jaws. And he who would trick the lion will soon, despite his struggles, feel again the grip of his talons, even as Christ above hath wisely ordained. At the end of the *ottave* is written : *finis* the 18th day of July, 1496 ;" and at the end of the following *terzine :* "*finis* the 30th day of November, 1496." They treat of the war with Pisa, the withdrawal of the Emperor, and so on.

The Florentines were an essentially political race, and, after the expulsion of the Medici, immediately resumed their old habits of thought; so that it now seemed as though the Republic had never ceased to exist. Accordingly, while we see that the popular writers, from a sense of incapacity or perhaps of reverence, always abstain from religious topics, we find them continually occupied in discussing and writing on politics. Their spelling and grammar may be feeble, but their very blunders assist the ingenuous manifestation of their individuality: they are always full of life and ardour, full of spontaneous originality. But if it be asked whether, in this reawakening of the old Florentine spirit, there were any learned men devoted to politics, and if so, what were the merits of their writings, we should have to reply that the genius of Machiavelli, Guicciardini, and Giannotti began to bud under this Republic, and flowered in the sun of its freedom: all three were the undoubted offspring of the revolution of 1494, the revolution initiated by the Friar. For during that period we find political life active and flourishing in all directions. New laws and reforms are discussed with marvellous skill, and carried out with the utmost prudence; a new generation, full of vigour, is springing up, and men of riper age show experience in the business of the State. Even military affairs were conducted with success. Piero Capponi, as the leading spirit of the war, increased his reputation in the Pisan campaign; and the name of the valiant Antonio Giacomini had already become famous. All undertakings, in fact, were conducted in a way that would have done honour to the most warlike of republics, and was especially admirable in the case of Florence, which had barely shaken off the yoke of its sixty years' slavery. And although the chief merit of this energetic and zealous exercise of freedom is due to Savonarola, the founder of the new Republic, the germs which, fostered by his care, so soon flowered and bore good and lasting fruit, must have been already latent in the Florentine people. Their freedom, in fact, outlived the Friar's death: after being crushed by the blows of many enemies, it revived with increased glory: again assailed by powerful hosts, it was finally overthrown, but its fall was heroic, and its glory has lasted for ever.

But, on turning our glance to the religious life of this same people, things wear a very different aspect. We always find something forced and ephemeral in it, something that defies definition, but is patent to all acquainted with the chronicles of the time and the religious works of Savonarola's disciples. The latter, indeed, can only faintly reproduce their master's ideas, and give feeble echoes of his words. No original thought ever issues from their mind, no vigorous line from their pen.[1] In spite of its boasted new birth in religion, this people has left posterity no record of its faith. Savonarola's is the sole figure that is truly and supremely religious; he seems to be the only real human being in the midst of a dream-world, where all is changing and evanescent. It must not, however, be implied that there was no great religious reform, no universal moral improvement; but this multitude that spontaneously reconquered its freedom, could only be kept steadfast in its faith by the daily stimulus of the Friar's sermons. His voice once hushed, vice and unbelief instantly reared their heads. All can see that if the Republic of the Florentines survived their leader, not so their religion.

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[1] Fra Benedetto might be cited as an exception; but he is only original and eloquent in the narration of real events: when touching on religious questions he never rises above the level of commonplace.

Although Savonarola tried to hide it from himself he must have frequently foreseen this result. At these moments he hurled bitter reproofs on his much-beloved people, threatened them with the awful wrath of the Lord, and announced that their promised felicity would be replaced by terrible chastisements. But he had an intense need of trust and hope; the natural course of events was no longer to be checked, and it was fatally whirling him along. When he first spoke to them of religion and morals, the Florentines were roused to love of liberty; he had then favoured their desires by counselling and promoting the foundation of a new Republic, and immediately became the idol of the multitude. But he sought to make politics and free institutions serve the cause of religion, whereas the Florentines wished to subordinate religion to freedom. Whenever the Friar lost sight of politics, he could no longer command his hearers' attention. Hence he was obliged to proclaim Jesus Christ King of Florence; to represent himself as the mouthpiece of the Virgin, when he counselled from the pulpit the formation of the new government, and declared that the Almighty Himself had ordained the abolition of Parliaments. He was continually obliged to compare the new order of government with the hierarchy of the angels, and the successive days of the Florentine rebellion with the seven days of the Creation! In point of fact, even while Savonarola seemed omnipotent over the Florentines, their religious indifference proved an insuperable obstacle; it was the only result achieved by the Medici that he could never entirely destroy. The people leapt from doubt to fanaticism, and from fanaticism back to doubt, and his best efforts notwithstanding he never succeeded in making them truly devout.

This is a very important fact, and one deserving of serious attention, since only by its aid can we comprehend the unexpected catastrophe of the strange drama of Savonarola's life. His aim was to be the regenerator of religion; but the Florentines adored him as the founder of the Republic. If they showed so much ardour in defending him against the Pope, it was because the latter sought to reinstate the Medici in Florence, and therefore they upheld their own freedom in defending the Friar. But if Alexander Borgia, whose interest in religion was of the slightest, had succeeded in separating the one cause from the other, Savonarola could have no longer counted on the same zeal; the ground would have yielded beneath his feet.

Meanwhile—to resume our interrupted narrative—in consequence of Savonarola's sermons on Amos and Zechariah, the fame of the new doctrine was noised throughout the world. It excited much attention even in the East, where the Sultan caused the sermons to be translated into Turkish for his own reading.[1] From France, Germany, and England Savonarola received letters from new followers whom these sermons had converted to his views.[2] And at the same time the Italian princes addressed him sometimes in terms of flattery and then of reproach, inasmuch as all these potentates, being more or less uneasy in their conscience, considered themselves personally touched by his invectives against tyranny and vice.

The Duke of Ferrara, however, who was his true friend, maintained a constant and affectionate correspondence with him, through his ambassador in Florence. Savonarola gave him good advice and sent him his works in return.[1] On the other hand, Paolo Somenzi, the Milanese envoy, who had always been a pertinacious opponent, was now using his best efforts to persuade Savonarola to second the designs of Duke Ludovico, also, as we are well aware, a declared enemy of the Friar.

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[1] Burlamacchi, p. 71.

[2] Savonarola often alluded to this in his sermons. "Even from Germany letters come to us from men having faith in these things." *Vide* "Prediche sopra l'Esodo," sheet 39. Florence, 1498.

On the 12th of April, 1496, this man, Somenzi, sent his master a letter from Savonarola, earnestly begging him to give it a gracious reply, because "this Friar is now master of the people, and has the power to make it submit to your Highness." Savonarola's letter has not been preserved, but we see by the reply that he must have expostulated with the Duke for giving ear to his detractors, and urged him to do penance for his sins. Ludovico's answer is so excessively gracious as to be almost ironical. He excuses himself on the score of having heard that the Friar spoke ill of him, and inculcated, from the pulpit, the duty of disobeying the Pope; nevertheless he promises to believe no more of these calumnies. As to his own sins, says the ingenuous Duke, he is not conscious of having committed any, having always led the life of a good Christian. Would Savonarola kindly inform him what penance he should perform!

By the Duke's order, Somenzi brought this letter to St. Mark's, repeated his visit on several occasions, and tried by soft words to induce Savonarola to make the Florentines join the League. He also promised that his master would gain him the favour of his brother, Cardinal Ascanio, who was very powerful in Rome, and hitherto one of the most zealous in spurring the Pope to excommunicate him. But Savonarola was neither to be conquered by threats nor by blandishments, and on the 25th of April sent Ludovico a very dignified reply. "It is not true that I have ever absolutely asserted that the Pope should be disobeyed. This would be reprehensible, as being contrary to the precepts of our faith, from which I have never swerved and never intend to swerve. The same calumniators have told you that I speak ill of your Lordship, but I allude to no special person when urging repentance upon all. And if your Highness be in the spiritual mind you give me to understand, you have only to persevere in it, and can need no better judge than your own conscience." He also told the orator, Somenzi, that he was by no means hostile to the Duke, and was ready to do all he could for his welfare; but at the same time "was no fitting instrument for that which was now asked of him." And he added that "the Florentines refused to enter the League, for fear lest the Duke, together with the other powers, should aim at destroying the popular government, and playing the despot in Florence."[1]

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[1] *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxx., some of Savonarola's letters to the Duke of Ferrara. Others, including those of the Duke, are given in A. Cappelli's "Frà Girolamo Savonarola," &c.

In the same way, and for the same reasons, Savonarola was obliged to write to Galeotto Pico, prince of Mirandola, who was then oppressing his States with cruel tyranny, and therefore deemed that he too had been attacked in the preacher's sermons. The Friar again denied having made any personal attacks, repeated that his mission was only to announce the scourge, and urge all to repentance.[2] The prince, who was brother to the famous Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, and father of Giovanni Francesco Pico, the biographer of Savonarola, had a very different nature from that of his kinsmen. His life was a series of atrocious acts of cruelty, and he had long kept his mother and another brother confined in a dungeon. Accordingly Savonarola now changed his tone, and on the 26th of March, 1496, sent him a very menacing letter: "I counsel you to return to God, to live after the manner of a good Christian, to repent the past, and recur to piety. Otherwise, I make known to you that severe chastisement awaits you, and that you shall be scourged in your substance, your flesh, and your kindred. Likewise I announce to you that your life is near its end; that if you obey not my words, you will go to hell, and this letter will be brought up against you before the judgment-seat of God, and leave you no way of escape."[1] And Gio. Francesco remarks on this head: "My father was then in the prime of health and strength, and seemed likely to have a long life; nevertheless he only survived two years after this truly prophetic letter, and from that moment our family history has been a long and sanguinary tragedy that still seems far from its end."[2] The unhappy youth certainly did not foresee that he was to be one of the saddest victims of the disasters Savonarola had foretold. On the night of the 5th of February, 1533, he was murdered by the hand of his own nephew!

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[1] *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxxi., the letters of Somenzi, Savonarola, and the Duke.

[2] This letter has no date. It was published by Padre Marchese in the "Archivio Storico Italiano," Letter iv.

But of all these enraged potentates the Pope was by far the most incensed, inasmuch as he had only given Savonarola a verbal permission to resume his sermons, and hoped that the Friar would lower his tone. The Signory, on the other hand, had expressly commanded him to re-enter the pulpit, and he had shown himself more violent and aggressive than ever. Alexander, therefore, continued to address threatening reproofs to the Florentine orator, Messer Riccardo Becchi, not only complaining of the Friar, but still more of the Signory for upholding him and basely truckling to his will by refusing to join the League. Consequently on the 10th of March, 1496, a Pratica was held to consult on what should be done, but no conclusion was reached. No one wished to desert the French alliance; all distrusted Ludovico and the Pope, and all considered that Savonarola's sermons were indispensably required. Nevertheless, dreading lest Borgia should proceed to violence, they made an effort to pacify him. Even Piero Capponi, although one of Savonarola's adherents, remarked, with soldierly good sense, that they must remember what great harm Papal edicts had often wrought on the city, "and especially on our merchants in divers parts of Christendom."[1] The Ten wrote repeatedly to the orator and the cardinals in Savonarola's defence;[2] but the Pope was only the more enraged, and curtly refused to grant any spiritual indulgences asked by the Florentines at that time. It was decided to try to soften his anger by sending him, as had been proposed at the Pratica, an ambassador-extraordinary in the person of Messer Niccolò Pandolfini, Archbishop of Pistoia. But directly the prelate entered the Pope's presence, the latter greeted him with harsh complaints against the Florentines for remaining faithful to France, refusing to join *the Holy League for the expulsion of the barbarians*, and thus by their obstinacy bringing Italy to ruin. He then spoke of the Friar, and though his words were few, they displayed the depth and virulence of his ill-repressed wrath and hatred. The Archbishop tried to exculpate the Republic in the best way he could. As regarded the French alliance, he alleged the binding nature of treaties, and the constant hatred shown to the Republic by the Venetians and the Duke. Then, as to the Friar, he reminded His Holiness how he had himself, through the lips of a Cardinal, authorized him to resume his sermons; so that neither the Friar nor the Signory could believe themselves guilty of disobedience. But at this point he was roughly interrupted by the Pope, who said: "Well, well! we need not speak of Frà Girolamo just now; a time will perhaps come when we can speak of him to better purpose. As to the rest, you give me nothing but words, and are trying to keep your foot in both stirrups at once."[1] Thus the first interview was brought to an end.

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[1] This letter also was published by Padre Marchese, Letter v.

[2] To. Franc. Pici, "Vita Hier. Savonarolæ," chap. xxi.

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[1] Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," pp. 67–68.

[2] Ibid. pp. 63–74.

Meanwhile the Pope summoned a consistory of fourteen Dominican theologians, charging them to hold an inquiry on Savonarola's conduct and doctrines, so as to discover some mode of condemning and inflicting severe punishment on his followers as well as on himself. But it was strange to see how the principal charge brought against Savonarola by this assembly of theologians was that of *having been the cause of all Piero de' Medici's misfortunes.*[2] What other proof can be needed that the whole question was one of political, not of religious strife? The Ambassador Becchi did not remain idle while this was going on; but profiting by the favour and assistance of certain of the Cardinals, went round to all the others, trying to win them over to the side of the Republic, and endeavouring to gain time, since nothing else could be done at the moment.[3]

Meanwhile Savonarola, his sermons being ended, had gone after Easter to Prato, where he had preached on the

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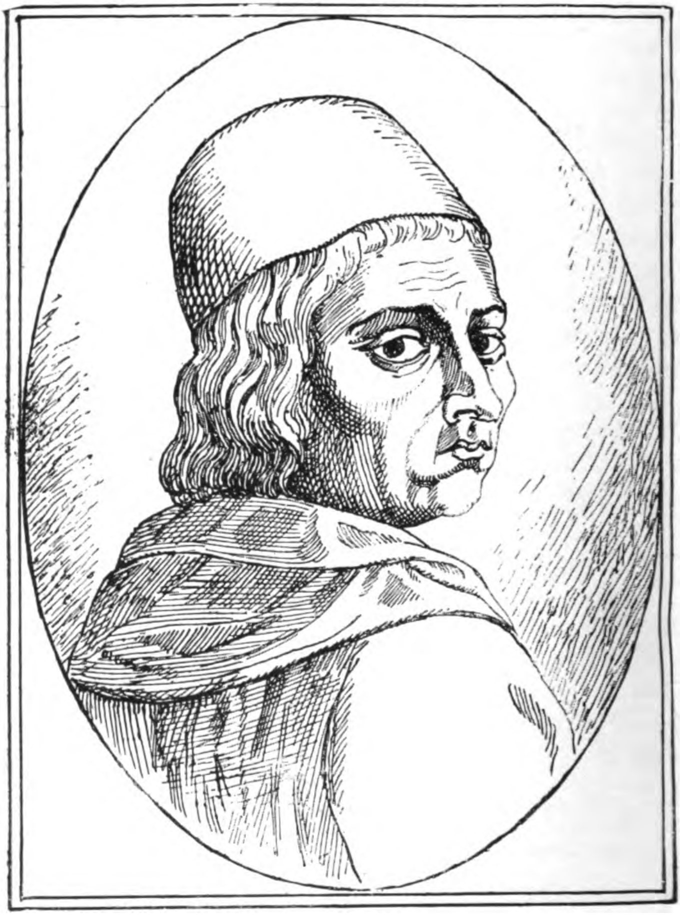
[1] In a letter of the 24th of March, 1496, addressed to the Ten, Pandolfini gives a minute report of this dialogue. *Vide* the "Documenti" published by Padre Marchese in the "Archivio Storico Italiano," pp. 149–151.

[2] This at least is the only accusation mentioned by the Ambassador, Messer Riccardo Becchi, who gives a full account of this consistory in his letter of the 5th of April, 1496. "Documenti" published by Padre Marchese, Ibidem, p. 152.

[3] *Vide* the same "Documenti."



MARSILIO FICINO.

prophet Joel from the steps of the chapter house, and afterwards delivered, in the refectory, a sermon on faith before all the Professors of the Pisan University, which, by reason of the war, had been transferred to this town. His success was immense; great numbers of people had journeyed from Florence to hear him, and "all the land of Prato," says an old biographer, "seemed turned into a church."[1] Several learned doctors were converted on this occasion. A certain Messer Olivieri, a canon of the Duomo of Florence and a skilled Aristotelian, said to his pupils: "Let us cast away our books and follow this man, for we are scarcely worthy of him." Marsilio Ficino, then considered the first philosopher of his age, expressed himself almost ecstatically regarding the excellence of Savonarola's doctrines. It was then, too, that the famous Niccolò Schomberg was converted, who afterwards assumed the robe of St. Mark, became Archbishop of Capua, and finally a Cardinal.[2]

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[1] "Biografia Latina," sheet 21ᵗ, where there is also mention of some sermons given in Lucca.

[2] This journey is noticed in a letter of the Ten to Becchi. Padre Marchese records this letter in a note at page 172 of his "Documenti," but wrongly dates it 1498, instead of the 16th of April, 1496. It runs thus: "At this present we hear that he (Savonarola) has gone to Prato and Pistoia; and we cannot refrain from laughing at what you tell us people are there saying about the government of the city depending on him, for he has never meddled in it, nor has any of our citizens ever confided the least thing to him concerning it." And in another letter of the 30th of March, 1496, the Ten wrote: "We marvel that so many things should have been said there about the Friar, as you write to us; for they are all fables and fictions invented by some one that seeks to accuse him for some evil end." *Vide* "Archivio Fiorentino," cl. x. series I., file 96, sheet 192. This second letter is also included by Padre Marchese at page 105 of his "Documenti."

We cannot ascertain whether Savonarola went as far as Pistoia; but there is no doubt about his visit to Prato. Burlamacchi mentions it at page 75, and adds that he also went to Pisa. This, however, is a mistake, since, as was noted by Guasti at page 43 of Gherardi's "Nuovi Documenti," Pisa was then at war with Florence. The mistake arose in this way: Burlamacchi always faithfully followed the "Biografia Latina," and in this work, at sheet 21, mention is made of Savonarola's sermons to

After these new triumphs Savonarola returned at once to Florence. He there hastened to revise and publish his treatise "On the Simplicity of the Christian Life" (*Della semplicità della vita cristiana*), intended as a serious reply to the Court of Rome, and in which, by a complete exposition of the whole Catholic doctrine, the author refuted the charges of heresy and schism his enemies were trying to bring against him. The chief merit of this treatise consists in its giving an exact and easily-understood compendium of the leading dogmas of Catholicism. And although this only demanded clearness of form and style, none the less it does signal honour to Savonarola's intellect that he should have been the first to attempt to free theology from the burdensome scholastic intricacies with which—even to this day—many writers still keep it encumbered, and thus begun to make it intelligible to the people. Later, we shall have occasion to note the presence of the same qualities in another work of far greater extent and importance, of which the present treatise, being merely, as it were, a rough sketch, may be passed over with hasty mention.

The author brought it out in the original Latin, almost simultaneously with an Italian translation, by Girolamo Benivieni,[1] to which he had written a preface, again

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the whole of the Pisan University (*studio*) "qui tunc ibi (*et Prato*) florebat pulcherimum," and Burlamacchi, forgetting that the Pisan University had, on account of the war, been transferred by the Florentines to Prato, makes Savonarola go to Pisa instead, and gives that city as the scene of the events which took place at Prato. Landucci speaks of these sermons at Prato, and says: "There were so many people from Florence and all the country round, that there was a perfect rain of them."

[1] This treatise must have been written in January, 1496, since on the 10th of that month Savonarola sent it, "still imperfect," to the Duke of Ferrara, begging him to keep it secret, because he wished to revise and correct it before giving it to the world. In fact, the letter sent to the Duke with the manuscript is dated 10th of January, 1496. When Count Carlo Capponi published it in his collection of "Alcune Lettere di Frà Girolamo Savonarola," &c., he considered the date to be given according

declaring his submission to the authority of the Roman Church, and explaining that he only wrote and preached in order "to combat the unbelief of these times, in which charity hath grown cold, and no gleam of good works is anywhere seen." The first book of this treatise is the only part of it devoted to the Catholic doctrines. He begins by insisting on the necessity of good works, then proceeds to describe the Christian life, and says that its root and foundation entirely consist in the grace of God. He defines grace, and concludes that every Christian should seek after it with his whole soul, inasmuch as without grace good works are of no avail. In the same book he discourses at length on the subject of the Divine ecstasy, that product of the Neo-Platonic beliefs to which Savonarola was so keenly sensitive. He concludes by saying that, although, in the state of ecstasy, good works are of little use, no Christian can ever attain to the vision of God, save after having long abounded in charity. He then treats of ceremonials and sacrifices, regarding which he merely repeats the doctrines of Aquinas. He pauses to note the difference between the sacrifices of the Mosaic and the Christian law, remarking that whereas the former only acted as means, and according to the disposition of him that offered them up, the latter infuse grace even by their own intrinsic value. This forms the conclusion of the first and principal part of the work. Its other books mainly consist of moral precepts; long dissertations on inward simplicity of heart; on external simplicity in conduct, dress, and all else; and they conclude by describ-

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to the old Florentine style, and that it should therefore be changed, according to the new style, to 1497. But this is a mistake, for one edition of the "Trattato della semplicità della vita cristiana" was printed in September, 1496, and another in October, 1496. As we have already explained, Savonarola being a Ferrarese, seldom dated letters to be sent out of Tuscany, according to the Florentine style.

ing the supreme bliss of the true Christian life.[1] The work was most eagerly read, was frequently republished, and must have been of great service in refuting the accusations of heresy under which Pope Alexander tried to disguise his personal and political attacks.

In the course of the same year Savonarola brought out an exposition of the Psalm "Qui regis Israel," in which he besought the Lord to come to rescue the world from its present depth of degradation. "For now all religion is extinguished," he said, "and it is the general practice to be one day in the theatre, and the next in the episcopal chair; to be in the theatre to-day, and to-morrow a canon in the choir; to-day a soldier, and to-morrow a priest." Meeting with the word *aper* in the course of the Psalm, he dwells on the instincts of that animal, and finds vices corresponding to every one of them in the priesthood of the day. He then again addresses the Lord, exclaiming, "Show to us at last Thy face, Thy light, and Thy truth."[2]

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[1] This was printed in Latin at Florence, *anno domini* 1496, *quinto kalendas septembris*, by Ser Piero Pacini. The same printer published an Italian translation of it *on the last day of October*, 1496. It was again reprinted during the fifteenth century, without any indication of time or place; and in the sixteenth century many fresh editions appeared in Florence, Venice, Paris, and Cologne, also one at Leyden in 1633, and another at Grenoble in 1677. Father Philippe Chant, of the Company of Jesus, translated it into French and published it in Paris in 1672. In exposition of almost the same theme, Savonarola afterwards produced two dialogues entitled, "Solatium itineris mei." He began the first in the shape of a discussion between Sense and Reason; but finding it was growing too long and full of quotations, he left it unfinished and rewrote it in a simpler form, better adapted for popular use. Soul and Intelligence are now the interlocutors; they speak of Jesus Christ and the future life, attack the errors of the Jews, and finally discourse of "the road to the heavenly land" that is indicated by the title. Both these little works appeared in Venice subsequently to the author's death —in Italian in 1535, and in Latin in 1536. As the chief object of all Savonarola's writings was the good of the people, he expounded the same ideas in many different shapes, the better to impress them on his readers' minds, and to diffuse them in all ranks of society.

[2] "Expositio Fratris Hieronymi Savonarolæ, psalmi lxxix., Qui regis Israel," &c. Florentiæ anno salutis, 1496, iv. Kalendas Maii. On the

This was truly characteristic of Savonarola! Submissive as to dogma, he was daring to the pitch of audacity as regarded points of discipline, and to the last hour of his life always remained the same.

In the month of May he returned to the pulpit to preach Sunday sermons on the Book of Ruth and on Micah. This time also his discourses were few and extremely long; frequently, after remaining silent two or three weeks, or even a month, he would preach in the Duomo for many hours at a stretch. He hoped by this course to avoid giving the Pope continual cause of complaint, and at the same time to keep alive the people's enthusiasm for his teachings and their own freedom. "We are still here," he told them, "instead of having fled, as some have declared. The first motive that urged us to come was the calumnies of these foes. We also discerned that for lack of dew from the pulpit, everything was becoming withered and our numbers diminished. I will even confess to ye that I cannot live without preaching; and, finally, I am here in obedience to Him that is the Prelate of prelates and the Pope of popes." Savonarola explained in these sermons how the Lord's spirit descended on the priesthood through the medium of the saints, and was then diffused among the whole people. "But now," he added, "the corruption of the clergy and the corruption of the Church prevent the spirit from being diffused among believers. Therefore we must needs beseech God to help us, and send down the scourge that, by correcting the Church, will re-open the way for an abundant diffusion of grace and of the spirit."

On the 23rd of May he invoked the descent of the

8th of June two new Italian editions of it appeared in Florence, a third at Modena in the same year, and another one (undated) in Florence. In 1509 it was again reprinted in Florence, at Lugano in 1540, at Tubingen in 1621, and also in other places.

Holy Spirit with such ardent and impassioned words, that his hearers were moved to torrents of tears. And the following day, in resuming the same subject, he said, "Even as the conjunction of the planets produces divers effects on the earth, so the prelates, who should be the planets of the Church, produce vices or virtues in the people, according as their qualities be evil or good. When they are corrupt, the whole Church and all Christianity are corrupt. Then the righteous are exposed to terrible warfare; inasmuch as they are bound to obedience, because all superior power emanates from God; but they are not bound to yield to commands opposed to the law of God. Wherefore there is great tribulation, great warfare when Christian princes are bad, and greater still when to the temporal power the spiritual also is united. Thereupon the anguish becomes unbearable; nevertheless we have to remain submissive, for *it is not the Lord's will that the keys be changed*. They (the wicked princes) have a double power, the spiritual and temporal conjoined, and use both in defence of evil. How then, can we live the good life? All seem to have fear of goodness. It was far happier in the days of the apostles; for they at least were not bound to respect an authority with which they were at war. What, therefore, can be done at present? We must await the coming of the scourge." Then, addressing himself to the clergy, he said, "I am the gate, crieth the Lord to ye, and he that enters not by this gate is a thief. Thou, prelate, that buyest benefices, art a thief; thou, father, that buyest them for thy children, art a thief. Traffic not, I say, in spiritual things; ye have them *gratis*, therefore give them *gratis* to others. Who, then, will follow the Lord's summons? who will be clothed in simplicity and forsake all things for the Church? O prelates! O lords of Italy! come forward! Will ye take this woman? Behold, this is their reply: 'Cedo jura *propinquitatis*.' They yield their rights, and will have none of them. Be ye therefore witnesses unto me, that I have called on them without cease for the last six years; or rather Christ hath called on them through me, yet they have refused to come and they renounce their rights. Wherefore strip their benefices from them, O Lord, and deprive them of all things. The sword, the sword, that is the sole remedy! I warn thee, O Italy! I warn thee, O Rome, that by Christ alone canst thou be saved! The time hath not yet come to send the Holy Spirit; but the time will come, and then, O Lord, Thou shalt be praised in all eternity."[1]

Thus this sermon ended, and nearly all the rest continued in the same strain to the 20th of August, 1496. On that day we find him preaching in the Hall of the Greater Council, by request of the Signory. Inspired by his surroundings, he now recurred to politics, and in rendering a general account of his past life, seized the opportunity to rebut the numerous charges which were being spread against him. "The clergy wrongfully complain of me. If I have attacked vice, I have attacked no individual in particular. But still greater wrong is done me by the citizens, who go about crying that I meddle in all the business of the State. I have never intervened in your affairs; both in public and in private I have said, and now repeat in this place, that such is not my office; and even did I seek to interfere in those things, no one ought to give ear to me. What if I have suggested good laws for the well-being of the people and its liberty? what if I have checked discord and pacified men's minds? All that hath been to the glory of God; and those men would stone me for a good work. They go about crying: The Friar would have money, the Friar hath secret intelligences, the

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[1] "Prediche sopra Rut e Michea," delivered on the festival days of the year 1496, after the end of Lent: Florence, 1497; Venice, 1513; Sermon

Friar would play the tyrant, the Friar would have a Cardinal's hat. And I tell ye that had I desired such things, I should not be wearing a tattered robe at this hour. I would be glorified only in Thee, my God! Neither mitres nor Cardinals' hats would I have, but only the gift Thou hast conferred on Thy saints—death, a crimson hat, a hat reddened with blood; that is my desire. But I tell ye that unless ye provide against these murmurings, great hurt will befall your city." After this introductory, Savonarola proceeded to offer suggestions for the security of the new government. He advised that the council should be allowed full liberty of discussion and authorized to express its opinions, but that a law should be passed at the same time for the severe punishment of all persons spreading slander in the city. "When the citizens are gathered together, no man can speak to the purpose unless he may speak his whole mind. Therefore let all have faculty to say what they will. O Father, there be many in whom one can put no faith. Have no care for that. Let them speak, for by their deeds shall they be known. But see ye that heavy penalties be inflicted on such as go about speaking evil of that which hath been said in the council. If thou art ill content with that which thy neighbour saith, do not speak ill of him, but come forth and declare to him: I like not your reasons, and then give him better ones in return. But if ye be distrustful the one of the other, and do nought but slander one another, then shall ye reap nought save dissension and discord." [1]

The delivery of this sermon in the Hall of the Greater Council, in the presence of all the magistrates and leading citizens of Florence, seems almost to carry us back a couple of years to the brilliant and successful days when the Friar was engaged on the foundation of the new Republic. How could the Florentines find courage for this open defiance of the Borgia's wrath, this disregard for his threats and his briefs? We are forced to conclude that some great change must have taken place in the position of the State. In fact the new events occurring in Italy, had evoked so many new dangers on all sides, that men turned in their alarm to the Friar, who alone had been able to steer them safely through their worst difficulties. And although his former efforts had been so ungratefully repaid, he again devoted himself to the defence of the Republic, and met, as we shall presently see, with a still baser and more cruel reward.

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[1] Sermon of the 20th of August, "sopra Rut e Michea." This sermon is also mentioned by Marin Sanudo, who records in his "Diarii," vol i. pp. 284–285) Venice, 1879), that this sermon was given in the Hall of the Great Council for the purpose, as he says, of keeping the Florentines firm to their alliance with the French.

CHAPTER V.

THE STRAITS OF THE REPUBLIC AND THE DISASTROUS COURSE OF THE PISAN WAR. THE DEATH OF PIERO CAPPONI. THE THREATS OF THE ALLIES, WHO SUMMON THE EMPEROR MAXIMILIAN TO ITALY. THE NEW BRIEF ISSUED BY THE POPE AGAINST SAVONAROLA AND THE LATTER'S REPLY. THE REPUBLIC IS BESIEGED IN LEGHORN BY THE FORCES OF THE EMPEROR AND OF THE LEAGUE. SAVONAROLA RETURNS TO THE PULPIT, AND THE FLORENTINES ARE MIRACULOUSLY RESCUED FROM EVERY DANGER.

(1496.)

THE turbulent vicissitudes of the past years had paralyzed the commerce and industry of Florence; the exorbitant sums paid to the French king and spent on the war had been a continual strain on its resources, and the public credit was lowered to such an extent that a bond of 100 florins on the Communal Bank was only worth ten florins in the market.[1] For the last two years the Signory had summoned a meeting of the council almost every month, to demand fresh supplies and impose fresh taxes;[2] but by this time both public and private funds were equally exhausted. To these troubles famine was added; for the rural districts were cruelly pinched by hunger, and the peasantry flocking to Florence in troops. According to the old law they would have been expelled as foreigners; but the new rule of charity accorded them a brotherly welcome. There was much discussion on the point, it is true, but the Friar's adherents carried the day, and gave shelter in their own houses to as many persons as possible.[1] Then, however, all poured into Florence, and misery increased. The sight of those haggard rustics augmented the general depression, and there were already a few cases of death from the plague.[2]

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[1] A *luogo* of the Communal Bank corresponded, as we have before explained, with what would now be called a share in the funds.

[2] Although by the law of 1495 the citizens were only bound to pay one-tenth (*Decima*) of their yearly income, the books of the Decrees (in the Florence Archives) are full of successive new tithes (*Decime*) levied by the Signory and the councils.

Nor did any better luck attend the campaign against Pisa, where the besieging forces were daily dwindling away from lack of provisions and money. On several occasions Florence had the pain of seeing some of her mercenary leaders desert to the enemy for higher pay; since the Pisans were always receiving fresh supplies now that Duke Ludovico and the Venetian Republic were trying to gain a foothold in that city. Thus, while the Florentines saw the enemies they faced daily growing in strength and numbers, other foes were attacking them in the rear. The peasants whose fields had been for two years ravaged by the war, were now suffering from famine, and, maddened by hunger, often broke out in revolt and attacked the camp in such great numbers and with so much fury that it was necessary to repulse them by force.[1]

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[1] Nardi, vol. i. p. 104.

[2] Nardi, vol. i. p. 104 and fol. See, too, the "Biografia Latina" and Burlamacchi. In Landucci's "Diario," p. 127, we read: "Just at this time the plague assailed us worse;" and at pages 132 and 134, that the disease known under the name of French boils (*bolle franciose*) was spreading very rapidly that year. As we see by a debate of the 3rd of March, 1496, measures were already being taken to check the pestilence, and Savonarola wrote to his brother Alberto on the 24th of July, 1497, that "More people are dying of certain malignant fevers than of real plague.'

Profiting by this state of things, the Pisans sallied forth under the command of Gian Paolo Manfroni, and gave battle to the whole of the besieging army. Both sides fought well; but the Florentines were compelled to abandon all their strongholds in the plain and withdraw to the hills.[2] Towards the middle of September they were again attacked, and forced to surrender their position on the hills, thus forfeiting all their previous advantages. Thereupon the enemy, pushing forward with increased daring, endeavoured to cut the communications between Leghorn and Florence.[3] Had the attempt succeeded, the Florentines would have been utterly ruined, as by no other road could necessary supplies of corn be obtained.

But of all their disasters, the greatest and most depressing to men's minds was the death of that brave and generous citizen, Piero Capponi, on the 25th of September, 1496. He was laying siege to the castle of Soiana, in the hope of recapturing it from the enemy, and, according to his usual habit of doing the work of a common soldier as well as of commander, was engaged in planting his guns against the walls, when a shot from the Pisans struck him down.[4] His biggest gun had burst on the previous day, and this had seemed to him so evil an omen, that he had predicted his own death, and written to his confessor, Frà Salvestro Maruffi, asking him to commend his soul to God.[5] The news of this event spread incredible terror both in the camp and the city.

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[1] Nardi and Guicciardini.

[2] Soiana, Terriccinola, Cigoli, and others.

[3] Guicciardini, Nardi, Sismondi.

[4] See Acciajoli's "Vita del Capponi," published in the "Archivio Storico Italiano," vol. iv. part ii.

[5] Machiavelli, "Frammenti Storici: Opere" (Italy, 1813), vol. ii. p. 308.

His soldiers fled in dismay from Soiana and refused to continue the siege.[1] In Florence the Government immediately decreed splendid obsequies to Capponi at the expense of the State; and no other citizen was ever so universally mourned. His corpse was conveyed up the Arno to Florence in a funeral barge, exhibited to the public in his house by the Trinità bridge, and then borne to Santo Spirito, followed by all the magistrates and a countless multitude of people. The church was illumined by quantities of huge torches, and the walls were draped with four rows of banners, in which the arms of the magistrates alternated with those of the Capponi. Eulogistic speeches were pronounced over his bier, extolling the deeds and lamenting the loss of this valiant soldier and eminent citizen. His remains were then laid to rest in the tomb prepared by his grandfather Neri, for his illustrious great-grandfather Gino Capponi.[2]

But fate had fresh adversities in store for Florence. Taking advantage of the perils by which she was threatened, the allies pressed her from all sides, to induce her to break with France and join in the so-called Holy Alliance. Aware of the great detestation in which Piero de' Medici was held, they said no more about him, but promised to maintain the free government of Florence, and assist it to conquer Pisa, provided it would enter the League; otherwise they threatened instant war to the Republic. The Arrabbiati favoured the pretences of the allies, but the people unanimously opposed them, knowing well that these were merely intended to pave the way for a change of Government,[3] and also because no reliance could be felt in the promises of allies who were too ill-agreed among themselves to be able to achieve anything. On the other hand, King Charles was again talking of a second descent into Italy, and seemed to be already preparing for the enterprise, so it was accordingly decided to remain firm to the alliance with France.

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[1] Acciajoli, "Vita di P. Capponi."

[2] In the same church of Santo Spirito. *Vide* Acciajoli's "Vita di Piero Capponi," Giovanni Cambi, "Cronica" of the 25th of September 1496.

[3] "The which caused much trouble and murmuring among the people, who were universally agreed not to break with his Majesty the King,

But this rumoured return of the French filled the soul of Duke Ludovico with fresh alarms. He who boasted of being the umpire of Italy, and was the chief author of all her disturbances, now trembled at every change of the wind, in continual fear of losing the power he had usurped. We find him at once planning new treaties and alliances, summoning fresh strangers. For some time past he had been on good terms with the Emperor Maximilian,[1] who had taken one of his nieces to wife, and granted him the investiture of the Milanese duchy as a fief of the Empire. He therefore conceived the idea of inviting Maximilian to come to Italy to possess himself of the iron crown, re-establish the diminished authority of the Empire, and act as arbiter in the many dissensions of the different States. The presence and authority of the Emperor would suffice, he thought, to prevent the coming of the French; and furthermore, Maximilian being entirely unprovided with men and money, would be necessarily dependent on those who could furnish him with both. And Ludovico manœuvred so dexterously that he was authorized to invite him in the name of the League and promise him 40,000 ducats monthly, for three months; of which sum 16,000 were to be supplied by the Venetians, as much by Ludovico himself, and 8,000

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especially because of their doubts that certain evil-disposed citizens were secretly plotting, by this means of the League, to alter the present government of the Republic" (Nardi, vol. i. p. 90). The same is to be inferred from the letters of the Italian ambassadors in Florence.

[1] At that time he was only King of the Romans, although called Emperor by the Italians.

by the Pope, on condition, however, that the Emperor brought an army strong enough to achieve some effect.[1]

But at this juncture it was learnt that King Charles had renounced all idea of returning to Italy. That monarch was once more expecting to become a father, and was too much absorbed by this joyful hope to think of other things. In fact a son was born to him in September; but it died the following month, leaving the king so overwhelmed by grief, that he took no measures to relieve the scanty remains of his army, left in the kingdom of Naples, who, without supplies, and hard pressed on all sides, were on the point of falling into the enemy's hands. The news of the Dauphin's death produced various effects in Italy. It was regarded in Florence as a fresh verification of Savonarola's prophecies. Then the intelligence that Charles had abandoned all thoughts of Italy slackened the eagerness of the allies for the Emperor's arrival, and made them almost retract their offers. But Ludovico, although now unsupported, firmly adhered to his purpose, and pressed him to come even more eagerly than before, in the hope that being now his sole ally, he would be able to lead him as he chose. While Maximilian was marching towards the frontier, the Pope was encouraged by the new aspect of affairs to put an end to delay and come to open war with the Florentines. His forces and those of the Sienese stationed at the bridge of Valiano, attempted to invade the territory of the Republic. After repeated repulses, however, they were driven to flight and compelled to seek refuge at Montepulciano. But although the Florentines were victorious, this event had forced them to weaken the army before Pisa, while it was in the sad straits we have recently described, and at a moment when the movements of Ludovico and the Emperor kept them in dread of fresh attacks from the north.[1]

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[1] Sismondi, "Histoire des Républiques Italiennes," vol. vi. p. 460. In Guicciardini's "Storia d'Italia," vol. ii. p. 69, we find it stated that the Emperor was promised 60,000 ducats, and that Ludovico the Moor undertook to give him 30,000 more. But so deep was the distrust of the Florentines for the League, that, as Nardi writes, "It was publicly stated that their (the Florentine) dominions had been amicably divided and apportioned among the said members of the League" ("Istorie," vol. i. p. 97).

The Emperor, in fact, had already crossed the Alps, but with so small a force, that, as if from a sense of shame, he avoided passing through Milan, where the Duke had made grand preparations to receive him. Taking the route by Genoa instead, he sailed from that city on the 8th of October, with six Venetian galleys and a few Genoese ships. Disembarking at Spezia, he marched inland to Pisa, with only 1,000 foot soldiers, who were soon joined by a second thousand, and five hundred horse. The Pisans gave him the heartiest welcome, lodged him sumptuously, and, rushing to the bridge over the Arno, cast into the river the statue of King Charles, and set up the Emperor's in its place. They were full of hope, well supplied with men and money, good leaders, and abundant provisions. Reinforcements, too, were pouring in from all sides, and now, as a piece of additional good luck, came this opportunity of gaining the prestige and power of the Empire in favour of their cause.[2]

With the Florentines, on the other hand, all things fared badly, fate and mankind being equally adverse, but nevertheless they faced their ill-fortune with admirable energy. Their courage never failed ; they went on collecting men, money, and all obtainable provisions, and sent everything to the camp. They appealed to the patriotism of Florentine merchants settled in France for contributions in aid of their native land, urging them to hire soldiers, send corn, and do everything in their power as behoved good citizens. Nor did their efforts stop here; for on perceiving that at this moment Leghorn was the key of the Tuscan territories, and about to be attacked by the foe, they instantly furnished it with abundant supplies, and set to work so vigorously to strengthen its defences, that it seemed well-nigh incredible how in their straitened condition they could accomplish so much.[1] And, as we have already seen, the Signory's first thought was to secure Savonarola's help, and induce him to rouse the courage of the masses, who disheartened by the many dangers and enemies arrayed against them, were apparently incapable of effort without the stimulus of his voice. Savonarola had promptly and readily undertaken the task of encouraging the more influential citizens. But he had not yet returned to the pulpit, foreseeing that if he began to preach, the Roman Court would instantly make him the object of fiercer and more threatening attacks, such as he felt reluctant to provoke.

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[1] Nardi, Guicciardini, Sismondi.

[2] Nardi, vol. i. p. 103 and fol.; Guicciardini, "Storia d'Italia," vol. ii. p. 81 ; Sismondi, vol. vi. p. 465.

For, of all the Republic's foes, Alexander was undoubtedly the most virulent. The Duke of Milan would have been satisfied for the present by seeing the Arrabbiati gain the upper hand in Florence, and the Venetians by acquiring some influence in Pisa; but the Pope aimed at the total destruction of the Republic, and the temporary reinstatement of the Medici, to pave the way for his own sons. Unlike all the other allies, who were content to await the coming of the Emperor, he could not restrain his eagerness, and began the attack with his own troops. His ruling motive was hatred for Savonarola, whose return to the pulpit he greatly feared, knowing that the Florentines, if again guided by their Friar and cheered by his voice, would probably be capable of heroic resistance. And in that case all the hopes inspired by the Emperor's descent might speedily be crushed. He therefore began to weave fresh intrigues; waiting, nevertheless, to see the issue of the war, for the Friar was not preaching at this moment, and the affairs of the Republic were rapidly going from bad to worse. The Imperial troops, increased to 4,000 strong by the Venetian and Milanese contingents, were already pushing on the siege of Leghorn. The Venetian fleet held the sea and blockaded the port, while a company of their soldiers was stationed at the Sacco bridge to cut the communications between Leghorn and the army encamped before Pisa. Nevertheless the Florentines provided for the emergency with a courage worthy of the old days of their Republic.

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[1] Nardi, Sismondi, and Guicciardini.

First of all they despatched Antonio Canigiani to restore discipline in the camp where there had been much disorder since Capponi's death, and he was also instructed to concentrate the army at Montopoli, in readiness to march on whatever point circumstances or the movements of the enemy might dictate. Bettino da Ricasoli, the governor of Leghorn, was noted for his energy and military talents, and now the Ten sent him a reinforcement of three hundred men, under the command of Count Cecco, who, profiting by a dark stormy night and heavy rain, contrived to slip through the enemies' lines and make his way into the city. Thus strengthened, the garrison made several brilliant sallies, in which the Imperialists were defeated. Also, even in the midst of their adversities, it was a great advantage to the Florentines that the Emperor should not only be so incapable of directing the war, but likewise be hampered rather than helped by the Venetians and the Duke. For these latter, while quite willing to oppress Florence, had no desire to create another power in Italy; therefore they first urged the Emperor forward, and then pulled him back: thus allowing him to harass the enemy, but never to satisfy his ambition of marking his arrival by some notable feat of arms. Besides, Venice and Milan were already at odds, neither wishing the other to occupy Leghorn when the war should be ended.

For these reasons the Florentines had been so far enabled not only to hold their own against numerous and more powerful opponents, but to gain an occasional advantage over them. Their resistance, however, could not be much longer maintained, since famine was beginning to accomplish what the attacks of their enemies had failed to effect. And now their last hope was destroyed by the news that all the efforts of the Florentine merchants in France to come to their aid had entirely failed. These merchants had engaged the Count of Albigeon and his troops, had purchased many vessels and loaded them with wheat at their own expense, but, at the last moment, the Count had refused to fight in Italy, and the ships being caught in a tremendous gale on first leaving port, some of them had returned to Marseilles, and others had put out to sea in different directions, in the hope of making larger profits. Besides, even had they sighted Leghorn, how were they to enter the harbour when it was so strictly blockaded by the Venetians?[1]

Accordingly the general misery in Florence had increased to a pitch that is hardly to be described in words. Dread of the future was depicted on all countenances, while the faces of the poor were haggard with famine. The hospitals were all full. Peasants often sank down exhausted by the roadside, and perished for lack of food. The plague was making daily progress.[2] Yet, to such an extent may men be blinded by party spirit, that the Arrabbiati seemed positively to rejoice in the general distress. They went about crying aloud: "At last we can all see how the Friar has deceived us. This is the happiness he predicted for Florence!" And they already began to speak of surrender, dared to publicly censure the new government, and declared that now was the time to overthrow it.

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[1] Sismondi, vol. vi. p. 467; Nardi, vol. i. p. 105; Guicciardini, "Storia d'Italia," vol. ii. p. 78.

[2] Nardi, vol. i. pp. 104, 105, 115. In a Codex of the Magliabechian Library, cl. xxv. 23, we find the following list of prices during the famine of 1497: Wheat, 5 lire and 10 soldi the *staio;*[3] barley, 2 lire and 10 soldi the *staio;* oil, 24 lire the *soma;*[4] wine, 7 lire the *soma;* fowls, 3 lire

[3] *Staio*, bushel. [4] *Soma*, an ass-load.

The Signory, uncertain what course to adopt, resorted to religious services, and ordained that the miracle-working image of the Madonna dell' Impruneta, whose help the people always implored in adversity, should be brought to Florence and solemnly borne in procession. But the only thing, all thought, that could really comfort the people at this terrible pass, was the voice of their Friar, and all were grieved and disappointed by his silence. Therefore the Signory once more appealed to him, beseeching and almost commanding him not to shrink from his duty to the Republic, and at least, not to leave those whose greatest trust was in him, deprived of the consolation of his words in the midst of this dire peril and misery.

Having long been deeply moved by the general suffering and despair, Savonarola could not refuse the Signory's request, and on the 28th of October at last re-entered the pulpit. But how different was now the aspect worn by his flock! Present distress and dread of the future were printed on every face. All believed that the popular government was nearing its end, the triumph of the Arrabbiati at hand, and that famine and war would be followed by exile and death. All eyes were accordingly fixed upon him with looks of uncertainty and doubt. According to his frequent method he began his sermon in

the pair. At that time, 6 lire and 14 soldi made one broad gold florin; the florin answered to a modern zecchino, but the value of gold was much higher than at the present day. *Vide* Vettori "Il fiorino antico illustrato": Florence, 1738.

the form of a dialogue. "I was not to speak to ye; but I am here in obedience to the Signory, and to exhort ye once more to repentance. Are ye convinced? I tell ye that I am convinced, and that everything we have said will be verified to the last iota. I am convinced that God is turning the brains of Italy, and that many will be deceived. This scourge seemeth to be one thing and will prove to be another. Art thou convinced? Of what? That tribulations are at hand? That thou art wrestling with Christ? Know that the good promised to Florence will come, and that evildoers will suffer hell in this life and the next. Be assured, therefore, that unless ye change your life ye will suffer calamity? Thou still clingest to thy vices, O Florence; there is gambling and blasphemy; and thus ye draw down the scourge upon ye. Come, then! form this procession, it will be a goodly thing; and if ye implore God in a right spirit, I believe that some great grace will be vouchsafed to ye, and that we need stand in fear of none.

"But thou still puttest thy hope in men; thou still waiteth for aid from the king that cometh not, and hath -st already been chastised even as we foretold to him;[1] but I rather say unto thee: *Maledictus homo qui confidit in homine.*—Well, then, O father, what must we do? First of all it is needful to return to God; and then to lay aside the idea thou hadst already conceived of changing the government and making surrender; to use every human precaution to aid thyself; to lend money to the city to the full extent of thy means, and lend it without usury. Finally, I tell ye: be ye all united together, casting aside all dissension. And if ye form a true union, hearken well to these words: May my very robe be forfeited if we now drive not off our enemies. I say that if ye do this, I will be the first to go forth against them, crucifix in hand, and our enemies shall fly before us even to Pisa and beyond. Have faith in my words, O Florence! Remember the many tears thou didst shed in this church on the sixth of November,[1] and how then the revolution took place the same day, and thou wert made free! Remember how I prevailed on King Charles to depart from Florence, and when he returned from Naples, how I went, almost at full speed, to his camp, and threatened him; wherefore he left us unharmed. Have faith, then, in my words, and trust in the Lord. Happen what may, I fear nothing, if ye return to the Lord, and remain united, and do all that is humanly possible."

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[1] Charles VIII., who had lost his last and then only son.

Then, once more addressing those who murmured against the new government, he said: "Now I will say another word to ye. Ye citizens are of three kinds. First come those who were exiles under the old government and yearned in vain for their country. Now ye have it; therefore be quiet. Secondly, those who had the halter already round their neck. Now ye have both safety and liberty; therefore be quiet. I stir not, father. That is not true; ye are all plotting, and I well know what ye would have. Lastly come the citizens who hold office in this present Republic, and yet fail to enforce justice, for the city is full of gambling, blasphemy, lust, fornication, and disunion. To these I say: If ye do not maintain justice, the scourge will come upon ye. Finally I say to all—and I say it *in verbo Domini*—he that desireth a tyrant shall come to an evil end. Be ye united, therefore, arrange this procession, and trust in the Lord."[2]

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[1] In the text: "At nine days from this." He said this on the 28th of October, and the expulsion of the Medici had taken place precisely on the 6th of November, 1494.

[2] "Predica del Reverendo Padre Frate Hieronymo da Ferrara, facta ildi di sancto Simone et Juda. Adì 28 d'Octobre, 1496, per commissione della Sygnoria di Firenze, essendo la ciptà in timore grandissimo per la venuta dello Imperadore." Without indication of time or place. This sermon is one of the series on Ruth and Micah, delivered in 1496.

Thus spoke Savonarola that day; but while danger was still imminent, the blind confidence expressed in his words supplied the Arrabbiati with fresh reasons for ridiculing the Friar and his adherents. Nevertheless the people derived great comfort from his sermons, and so long as his voice was heard in the pulpit no fresh misfortunes, they thought, could possibly befall Florence.

On the 30th of October the miraculous image of the Madonna dell' Impruneta was brought into the city escorted by a vast multitude, and so great a fervour of devotion had never before been shown by the Florentines. They paced the town slowly in contrite silence; large sums were given in alms; every face was sad, and the aspect of the populace testified to their half-starved condition and their dread of greater privations to come. The procession had reached the street of Por Santa Maria, when a messenger rode in by the San Frediano Gate, and, crossing the Carrara bridge, came galloping down the Lung' Arno towards the Palace of the Signoria, bearing an olive-branch in his hand. But meeting the crowd by the way, he was instantly surrounded; men seized his horse by the bridle and anxiously asked for news from Leghorn. It was good news, for suddenly, and as if by a miracle, the ships from Marseilles had arrived with the long expected reinforcements and supplies of corn. They had been driven on their course by so fierce a wind that they had hardly been sighted at sea before they were skimming full sail into the port; while the Venetians could make no attempt to cut them out, having been compelled by the same wind to anchor off Meloria. No words can describe the frantic joy of the people. They pressed round the messenger with mighty shouts, and his words flew from mouth to mouth with many changes and exaggerations. Almost in an instant the city rang with the glad tidings, the bells pealed gaily, and in all the churches solemn thanksgivings were offered up for the miraculous succour received. Even to the Arrabbiati it seemed as though the Lord had come to rescue the Republic from imminent ruin, and that this time Savonarola had proved a true prophet. His fame and influence were a thousandfold increased, and the populace went about crying: "The Friar's sermons have saved us again." [1]

After all, neither the supplies nor reinforcements were of much account. Only six hundred of the men engaged by the merchants had consented to join the expedition, and, as we have said, some of the vessels chartered parted from the rest directly they were out of port, sailed elsewhere in the hope of swelling their gains, and were all wrecked. Accordingly, a rumour had spread that no chance of succour remained. Even now only five ships and two galleons had come in with corn and men. But their unexpected mode of arrival and at so opportune a moment produced the most encouraging effect, not only on Florence, but Leghorn. In the latter city the inhabitants were stirred to new hope, and firing all their guns in token of joy, they sallied forth against the Pisans, and at the same time hastened to strengthen the bastion of Ponte a Stagno, just as it was on the point of being seized by the enemy. The imperial troops, panic-stricken by the tremendous cannonade from the walls, and exaggerated rumours of the reinforcements from France, were easily put to flight with great slaughter, and left many horses and prisoners in the hands of the Livornese.

Meanwhile, on the 1st of November, Savonarola again appeared in the pulpit, and, referring to this unlooked-for good fortune, extolled the loving-kindness of God, inculcated the necessity of faith, of abandoning vice, of being constant in prayer, and of trusting in none save the Lord. He next sought to moderate the excessive gladness of the people. "It is not meet to let yourselves be so easily overcome whether by joy or by grief: ye must neglect no human precautions, but prepare more than ever for war." On the 2nd of November, being All Souls' Day, he made another and most successful sermon on "The Art of Dying a Good Death." [1] He said that the true Christian ought to keep the idea of death always before his eyes, and that by duly reflecting thereon, all might be led to righteousness. He depicted in very vivid colours the state of the soul at that supreme moment, giving a minute and ingenious analysis of all the passions and regrets by which man is then assailed. "Death," he exclaimed, "is the most solemn moment of our life: it is then that the evil one makes his last attack upon us. It is as though he were always playing chess with man, and waiting the approach of death to give him checkmate. He who wins at that moment wins the battle of life. O my brethren, for what do we live in this world, save to learn to die a good death!" He suggested that every one should keep some picture over his bed to remind him constantly of the peril of death. He minutely described some pictures of this kind imagined by himself, and the people listened to him with the deepest attention. These suggested designs were afterwards executed and engraved in many editions of this sermon, by some of the best artists of the age, and Sandro Botticelli is said to have been one of the number. Savonarola also gave fresh encouragement to the people that day, urging them to remain united and to labour for the defence of their country. After this sermon he again

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[1] Nardi, vol. i. p. 105. Landucci also records the event in his "Diario," p. 139, and concludes by saying: "That it was granted by God, in answer to our earnest prayers to the Virgin. The news arrived when She entered Florence."

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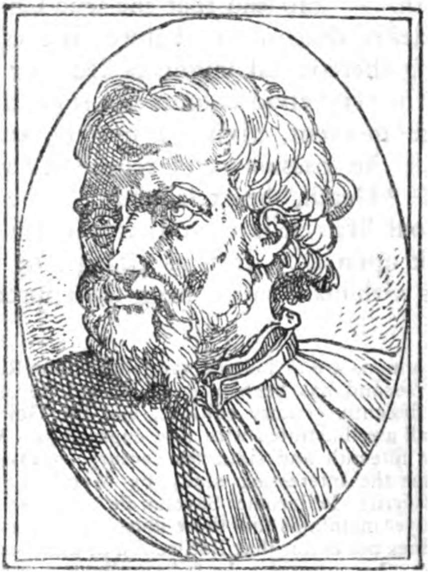
[1] These two sermons are included among those upon Ruth, Micah, and David, but the second has been often published separately. Audin mentions three fifteenth century editions, and the Guicciardini Catalogue four, and all are illustrated with fine engravings. With regard to these and many fifteenth and sixteenth century engravings in Savonarola's works, see the interesting study by Mons. A. Gruyer, "Les illustrations des écrits de Jérome Savonarole." Paris: Firmin Didot, 1879. Mons. Gruyer maintains that these illustrations are all by unknown engravers, and does not admit that Botticelli may have been one of them, since, contrary to other art critics, he fails to discover any traces of that artist's manner. Nevertheless Vasari asserts that Botticelli printed many of his designs, "though in a bad style, owing to faulty blocks," and he mentions, as one of the best, Savonarola's Triumph of Faith, adding that Botticelli became so fanatic an adherent of the Friar, as to forsake painting on that account. In the "Giornate" of Lorenzo Violi we find it more than once repeated that Sandro's workshop was the meeting-place of many good-for-nothings, many of whom were Arrabbiati—Doffo Spini among them—who all spoke ill of the Friar. Simone Botticelli, the artist's brother, was often present at these meetings and noted down their conversations in his "Cronica," a work often cited in terms of praise by the followers of Savonarola, but which has hitherto eluded our research.



SANDRO BOTTICELLI.

ceased preaching, and regretted having given the Pope a pretext for fresh complaints. For this time, the Borgia no longer confined himself to complaints.

Throughout the year Savonarola had been encompassed by snares. Even in April the Duke Ludovico, while zealously feigning to be his friend, had contrived, by means of his agents, to intercept the Friar's correspondence with the King of France, had noised the matter abroad, and sent copies of the letters in various directions in order to prejudice the allies against Savonarola. He even communicated them to the Duke of Ferrara in the hope of destroying the great friendship the latter was known to entertain for Savonarola.[1] But he failed in this intent, for the Friar told the Ferrarese orator that it was long since he had written to the king, and that these letters were undoubtedly forged. Accordingly the Duke continued to correspond with him, writing that he, too, was endeavouring to purge his city "of its vices as much as possible, and restore it to Christian living."[2] And also, through the same ambassador, he warned the Friar to be well on his guard against the snares which were laid for him, because "nets are cast far out to drag the fish in shore."[3] Savonarola was very grateful to him for this, and continually sent him good advice. Their correspondence was not only friendly, but carried on in a species of cypher, whenever it turned upon politics. Four months later Ludovico repeated the same stratagem by publishing other forged letters which he pretended to have intercepted. One of these, forwarded to the ambassador of France, teemed with abuse of that personage. The Frenchman was furious, demanded satisfaction from the Signory, and threatened to leave Florence; but it all came to nothing. Nor was Ludovico more successful with the forgeries he had sent to Bologna, Ferrara, and elsewhere.[1]

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[1] A. Cappelli, "Frà Girolamo Savonarola," p. 73, doc. c.

[2] Ibid. p. 75, doc. cii.

[3] Ibid. p. 77, doc. cv.

The Pope, however, did not condescend to such childish measures. On hearing the news of the help received by Leghorn and of the Friar's first sermon, he immediately issued another brief, dated the 7th of November, and addressed to all the Dominicans of Tuscany.[2] In this he no longer insisted on the reunion of St. Mark's with the Lombard Congregation; but on its entire separation from the latter, and its junction with all the other convents in Tuscany and Rome, in a new Tusco-Roman Congregation, with a special vicar of its own, who was, however, to be subject to the authority of the Vicar-General in Rome. The Pope entrusted the nomination of a vicar for the first two years to the Vicar-General and the Cardinal of Naples, who, though hitherto favourable to Savonarola and his community, was now their declared foe. The execution of this project was entrusted to Francesco Mei, an enemy of the Friar, but he was soon given a coadjutor in the person of Padre Giacomo di Sicilia, who was, on the contrary, very well disposed towards him,[3] and was appointed vicar of the new congregation. These subtleties were devised the better to entrap Savonarola, to which end the Pope was now devoting all his craft. But as he wished to achieve it without betraying his personal hostility to the Friar, he had purposely re-opened the question of the convents, while dexterously avoiding the objections Savonarola had already raised to the plan in September, 1495. Thus, he neither referred the Friar's case to the Lombard vicar, nor ordained the junction of the two hostile congregations, but, on the contrary, caused a man who had been most friendly to Savonarola's community to be appointed as vicar; and finally, as was set forth in the brief, gave an opportunity for the application of the new reform to all Tuscany and the Roman States.[1] But these were mere feints, his real purpose being totally different. For once Savonarola became subject to the authority of the new vicar, who was only a subordinate of the General of the Order in Rome, he would be deprived of the independence for which he had sought separation from the Lombard Order, would likewise lose the command over his own community giving him so much power in Florence, and, best of all, could then be relegated to any other monastery at a moment's notice. This had always been the Pope's purpose at bottom. Moreover, it was plainly evident that, when joined to the new congregation, and subjected to the pressure of a host of other convents, more or less jealous and hostile, St. Mark's, instead of being able to introduce its reforms among them, might easily fall into backsliding.

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[1] *Vide* Professor Del Lungo's previously quoted work ("Archivio Storico Italiano," new series, vol. xviii. part ii.), documents xi.-xiv. Landucci alludes to these events at page 137 of his "Diario," and concludes by exclaiming: "The poor Friar had so many enemies!" *Vide* also the Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxxii.

[2] This brief is still unpublished, and is preserved in the Riccardi Library, Cod. 2053, sheet cxviii. It is a very important document, since Savonarola's failure to obey it was the principal cause, or rather pretext for his excommunication, as may be seen by the terms of the brief. Ignorance of the existence of this brief has caused confusion as to the chronological order of the others, and consequently of Savonarola's replies. A copy of it is given in the Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxxiii.

[3] Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," p. 75 and fol.

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[1] "Then came a brief ordaining that all the convents of Tuscany should be united in a single congregation including St. Mark's and all convents subject to St. Mark's. At first, in his other brief, he (the Pope) commanded us to rejoin the Lombard Congregation, from which he had previously divided us; it is now desired that we are to form part of the Tuscan Congregation, and now here, now there. This seems to me to resemble the defence of the king in a game of chess, the which king, when in check, moves to the next square and then back again: verily the tricks of the wicked are manifest" (Sermon of the 18th of February 1498).

For all these reasons Savonarola, instead of obeying, resumed his pen and wrote his "Apology for the Congregation of St. Mark's." But now addressing the public instead of replying to the Pope, he adopted a very frank and daring tone. "I will not pause," he said, "to refute the charges brought against me as to my doctrines, since I have frequently replied to these, and am preparing to disprove them entirely in my work on the Triumph of the Cross, that will speedily be given to the light. But I reply to the command now imposed on me to join the new congregation. First of all, I have no right to do this solely on my own authority, but need the consent of 250 other monks, who have all written to the Pope to the contrary effect; and I am neither able nor willing to oppose their decision since I hold it to be honest and just." He then went on to adduce his reasons for believing that this junction would have a relaxing and corrupting influence on the severe discipline of St. Mark's, and thus prove specially hurtful to the youthful brethren now forming the majority in the convent. "If the other communities are in no need of reform, why should they desire to join us? And if they join us in order that we may reform them, we have already so many untrained youths among us that we have hard work to instruct them. Therefore, union with other convents would bring nought but disorder and confusion to all, and more particularly to ourselves." He then referred to the deplorable enmity existing between the various convents, and the mortal danger he had incurred from that cause both at Siena and Pisa. And he concluded by saying: "This union is therefore impossible, unreasonable, and hurtful, nor can the brethren of St. Mark's be bound to agree to it, insomuch as superiors may not issue commands contrary to the rules of the Order, nor contrary to the law of charity and the welfare of our souls. We must therefore take it for granted that our superiors have been misled by false reports, and resist meanwhile a command that is contrary to charity. Neither must we allow ourselves to be cowed by threats nor excommunications, but be ready to face death rather than submit to that which would be poison and perdition to our souls. When our conscience revolts from some command received from our superiors, we must first resist and humbly make protest, the which we have already done; but should this means fail, we must then follow the example of St. Paul, *qui coram omnibus restitit in faciem Petri*," [1] Thus, after a very brief truce, Savonarola was again at open war with the Pope.

Meanwhile, after the one stroke of luck in the unexpected succour from France, the fortunes of the war again declined, especially at Leghorn; and but for the jealous disputes between Ludovico and the Venetians, the siege would long since have been brought to a successful end. But, for the second time Providence seemed determined to intervene in favour of the Florentines. The same *libeccio* (south-easterly wind) that at the end of October had wafted the Marseilles ships safely into port, now, towards the 15th of November, began to blow with so much fury, that the whole of the Venetian fleet was driven aground. The Admiral's galley, with the Emperor on board, was cast broadside against the Rocca Nuova, all its crew and armament wrecked, and Maximilian himself barely saved. Two other vessels suffered the same fate, and the others were too severely injured to be of any use. The shipwrecked men all surrendered to the enemy in order to save their lives, so that great numbers of prisoners were taken that day at Leghorn, and sufficient booty to enrich many of the citizens. And now Maximilian, weary of fighting, as he said, "against God and man," withdrew ingloriously from the enterprise that he had begun and conducted with so little prudence. Nor would he give any explanation of this hasty resolve, nor make any mention of it, until after his arrival in Lombardy, when he complained bitterly of the conduct of the Venetians and the Moor. Fortune seemed to be against him to the last; for when, during his retreat, a considerable band of his Germans joined a number of Pisans in attacking the castle of Lari, Alessandro degli Alessandri, the Florentine commissary, reserved his fire until they were all in the moat, and then shot down the greater part of them. Thus between October and November the fortunes of the Florentines took a prosperous turn; and again, as if by a miracle, they were delivered from the most imminent danger.

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[1] "Apologeticum Fratrum Congregationis S. Marci de Florentia." It was printed in Florence in 1497, and then reprinted in 1674 by Quétif in his "Additiones" to G. F. Pico's biography of Savonarola. In this pamphlet all the arguments for and against the union are minutely analyzed and weighed.

Returning to the pulpit on the 26th of November, Savonarola reminded his hearers of their past trials, of the discouragement in which they had been plunged, of the divine mercy that had come to their aid, and exhorted all to give the most heartfelt and grateful thanks to the Lord. He then went on to recapitulate the history and merits of the popular government, again compared the different stages of its formation with the seven days of the Creation, reasserted his own prophetic mission, and promised to preach during the coming Advent.

On the next day, in fact, he began the first eight of those sermons on Ezekiel, which show that he had now relinquished all hope of truce or reconciliation with the Pope. "O Lord, teach me the way of adversity! I come to preach this morning solely to repeat that which I have before said, and I herewith confirm it afresh, and will give my life for it. . . . Should I retract," he continued, turning to the people, "thou mayest say that this Friar contradicteth God, that I speak lies, and thou mayest stone me and cast me from the pulpit." He recurred to his gift of prophecy; again predicted that the scourge was at hand, "the which will be all the greater, the less the people remain faithful to religion and liberty." [1]

The most important of these eight sermons was the sixth, delivered in the Duomo on the 13th of December by special request and in the presence of the Signory. Beginning, as was then almost his daily wont, with introductory remarks on the goodness and mercy of the Lord, Savonarola went on to enumerate all the blessings which had been poured upon Florence. "This is Thine own city, O Lord; Thou hast chosen and blessed it; Thou hast enlightened it with virtuous living: hast infused Thy faith and Thy light in the soul of this people. In addition to spiritual gifts Thou hast likewise vouchsafed it temporal blessings. And the first and greatest of these is the freedom Thou hast restored to it. For this is one of the highest of blessings; *quia non bene pro toto libertas*

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[1] "Prediche sopra Ezechiele," Venice, 1520. The first eight were delivered in Advent, 1496; the others in Lent, 1497. *Vide* the first sermon. These discourses although collected by Violi, were, like the series on the Psalms, given to the world in a very incomplete form. Violi himself explains this in his "Giornate," sheet 19. He collected the series on the Psalms in 1494, when little practised in the art of making verbatim reports, and first indeed noting them down for his own use, being as yet little concerned in Savonarola's affairs. But being encouraged by many friends to pursue the task, he employed greater care in reporting the rest of the sermons. And in 1496, being then engaged in publishing the series on Amos, he had only time for a very brief compendium of that upon Ezechiel. These, moreover, were originally much shorter than the others, as Savonarola himself stated in Sermon ix. Violi afterwards gave both this series and that on the Psalms to Luca Bettini, who was very urgent in the matter, and who then published them without Violi's permission, and much to his annoyance. Bettini makes some allusion to this in his own preface.

venditur auro. Before, the city was subject to the will of one man; now it is no longer fettered thus. If that man said: Do evil, then evil had to be done. If another tyrant said: Marry thy daughter to that man, thou wert constrained to obey; or: break off that connection, and thou wert constrained to break it off; or: give me that gold, and thou hadst to give it. In those days, this Thy people was beaten with rods, and yet had to suffer patiently." In this fashion the preacher went through the whole history of the liberation of Florence, from the expulsion of Piero de' Medici to the departure of Maximilian, in order to demonstrate the goodness of the Lord to the Florentines. He then exhorted them to virtue, and reproved their coldness in coming daily to his sermons, without practising what he taught them. "Preach to these men as one may, they have taken the habit of listening well and yet acting ill. This habit hath become a second nature, and they continue to listen without obeying. And it is as hard to change this course of things as to change the course of the waters. Thou hast made a habit of always hearing the command: do justice, do justice. Thou wilt become like unto a rook on a steeple, that, at the first stroke of the church bell, taketh alarm and hath fear, but then, when accustomed to the sound, percheth quietly on the bell, however loudly it be rung."

He also reproved the people for their ingratitude towards God, "for the freedom He hath given, ye are doing your best to destroy by continual murmurs and slanderings, and by the continual plots being hatched within and without the walls. Ungrateful people! God hath granted thee this Great Council, and thou seekest to overthrow it by admitting the enemies of the country. Such was by no means my intent. In the beginning, it is true that I allowed all to enter therein, because liberty was then fresh, and it was needful to put it to trial; but I by no means intended to find room for the bad, as is now the practice. Magnificent Signori, I tell ye that ye must keep your eye on this council, prune it and polish it, and see whether it be well that all its members should be granted admittance. Of necessity it must be a numerous council, but some limits should be put to it, if only to expel from its midst the enemies of the country. Nevertheless I hold not with those who would abstain from voting until this new reform be accomplished, and still less am I agreed with those who would have the magistrates chosen by lot. This is contrary to freedom, I tell ye. Thou art a bad Christian! go, read the history written by Lionardo d'Arezzo, where he sayeth that all went well with the city until its rulers were elected by lot, the which practice was devised by ambitious men. And there be always wicked ones of this sort, who go whispering these suggestions in men's ears. Such be they that plot against thy city, holding secret meetings within and without the walls together with priests and friars, and giving fine suppers and feasts. And all their speech is against the Friar: if they eat bread, they talk of the Friar; meat, and still of the Friar; if drinking wine, again of the Friar." "Take heed, O Florence, of these gatherings the sole purport of which is to ruin thy liberty. This poor Friar here hath to fight the whole world single-handed. Well, as to myself, I tell ye: Summon doctors, prelates, whomsoever ye will; I am ready to fight against all. I can tell ye that in the Order of St. Dominic there hath never been a heretic; but, on the contrary, many of its members have wrought great reforms in Italy. Ye cannot fail to remember Cardinal Latino, Angelo Acciaioli, and Sant' Antonino! Even so will it be now; but first of all it is needful to enforce justice and show severity. 'Tis your part, O Signori, to look to these things! Order an escort of armed men, and go sword in hand; should this not suffice, appeal to the people and make yourselves feared. Let all magistrates who leave crime unpunished, suffer the penalty of guilt. Do justice, therefore, magnificent Signori; justice, Signori of the Eight; justice, magistrates of Florence; justice, men and women; let all cry for justice!"[1]

In this way the year 1496 was brought to a close. The Florentine Republic had marvellously escaped an infinite number of perils; Savonarola's name and authority were again in the ascendant, and the popular party was again absolute master of the situation. But at the same time the struggle with Rome now wore an increasingly threatening aspect; and the Pope's hatred for the Friar and the Government created by him, burnt with inextinguishable fury. Moreover, so many enemies had been detected in the very bosom of the Republic, so many plots on the part of the Arrabbiati and the Bigi, that Savonarola perceived that not only were severe measures unavoidable, but that it would likewise be necessary to modify the form of the Greater Council, in order to save the Government from falling into the hands of men whose sole purpose was to destroy it, and who had merely profited by the indulgence hitherto shown them, to conspire with impunity against the freedom of their land.

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[1] "Prediche sopra Ezechiele." *Vide* Sermon vi.

CHAPTER VI.

FRANCESCO VALORI IS MADE GONFALONIER, AND PROPOSES SEVERAL NEW LAWS. CARNIVAL CELEBRATED BY A BURNING OF THE VANITIES. PURCHASE OF THE MEDICI LIBRARY BY THE MONASTERY OF ST. MARK. SAVONAROLA'S IDEAS ON THE BEAUTIFUL; HIS DEFENCE OF POETRY; HIS COMPOSITIONS IN VERSE.

(1497.)

THE events of the past year having again brought the popular party into favour, Francesco Valori was elected Gonfalonier of Justice for January and February, 1497, with a Signory altogether devoted to him. For a man of milder temper and less ardent passions, this would have been the moment to impose a check upon the Arrabbiati and the Bigi. But Valori, being always carried away by his impetuosity, now refused to listen to Savonarola's words, when the latter suggested that the Greater Council should be somewhat restricted in order to exclude from it all those who were conspiring against the Republic. On the contrary, he determined to increase its numbers by getting a new law passed, qualifying citizens to become members of the council at the age of twenty-four instead of thirty years. He thought to strengthen the Republic by admitting the people to a larger and more absolute share in its government; but results proved contrary to his wishes, inasmuch as the new law gave admittance to the corrupt and turbulent youth of the Arrabbiati, who were specially incensed against Savonarola, his new government, and the new mode of life he had introduced. Balls and festivities being forbidden, and the Carnival destroyed, they had no longer any purpose in life, and were therefore the ringleaders of every plot laid against the Friar. For the better execution of their plans, they had banded together under the command of Doffo (Ridolfo) Spini; went about armed, provoked quarrels, committed acts of violence, and had accordingly won from the people the title of *Compagnacci*, or Bad Fellows. The new law, by qualifying them to enter the council, furnished them with a powerful weapon which they did not hesitate to use for the injury of the Republic.[1]

Valori, however, seemed blind to these perils, and in fact, about the same time, we find the Signory proposing another and equally improvident measure. This was the law of the *Decima scalata*, or graduated tithes, corresponding with what would now be termed a progressive tax. It naturally encountered great opposition from all men of fortune, but was strenuously pushed by the popular party. Hence passions became heated, one side in urging on, the other in combating the Bill; and it is strange to find the same arguments alleged, the same speeches made, which we have heard repeated in our own time.[2]

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[1] Jacopo Nardi, vol. i. pp. 119-120.

[2] "La Decima scalata in Firenze nel, 1497; da manoscritti inediti di Messer Francesco di Guicciardini." Florence, 1849. These are two long and excellent speeches, supposed by the author to have been delivered before the Greater Council by a supporter and an opponent of the new law. The character of the Florentine man of the people and the nature of his eloquence are vividly pourtrayed in them. They could not have been delivered in the council, where, as we have already noted, no free discussion of a Bill was allowed; and therefore, like many of Guicciardini's speeches, must be entirely fictitious; but nevertheless

On the popular side it was averred—"That equality of taxation consists in imposing equal burdens upon all, and that even the new law failed to provide for this, inasmuch as while one tithe burdens the poor by taxing the necessities of life, two or three more only tax the superfluities of the rich.[1] This country of ours," the speech went on to say, "is like unto a piece of cloth of sufficient length to provide reasonable mantles for all; but that has been so unequally divided, that whereas one man has a mantle he may fold about him three times, and trail on the ground more than a yard at his heels, another has too short a measure for even a beggar's cloak." It then concluded with a burst of invective against the rich and the injury they wrought on the poor by their superfluous expenses. On the other side, it was urged by men of greater moderation, that—"Equality demands that no citizen should be able to oppress another, and that all should be equally subject to the laws; but to say that all must be equal in everything would be a blind interpretation of the word, very much like making a house with all the rooms on the same floor, and would lead to a state of chaos fit to overwhelm a whole world, much less a single city. Do ye not see that by these improvident laws ye sow discord, give rise to discussion, and throw open the doors to Piero de' Medici?" Whether the Signory was persuaded by these arguments to withdraw the law, or whether it was repulsed by the majority, it is certain that the *Decima scalata* was never passed, and that after this, things went more smoothly.

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have a right to be considered historical, as faithful versions of the opinions of either party. They were afterwards republished in Guicciardini's "Opere Inedite."

[1] The new law was to the effect that citizens should pay one-tenth only on an income of five florins, and that for every additional five florins a quarter of a tenth should be exacted in addition to the ordinary tax, but that the maximum to be paid should in no case exceed three-tenths.

During this period Savonarola was living in silent seclusion, employed in revising his "Triumph of the Cross," and writing a number of pamphlets, which he desired to publish quickly in order to extend the diffusion of his doctrines, and gain fresh champions in the violent struggle with Rome that, as he well knew by letters from that city, was not only inevitable, but imminent. On this account he had entrusted the direction of spiritual concerns to Frà Domenico of Pescia, whose fervour and energy in religious affairs equalled those of Valori in politics. This monk had so blind an admiration for his master, that he not only felt the most implicit faith in his prophecies, but believed him capable of working the greatest miracles, and would have joyfully laid down his life in support of any one of Savonarola's utterances. But unfortunately his extravagant zeal and unbounded credulity made him equally ready to go to perilous lengths.

While men's minds and public affairs were in this state, carnival time was drawing near, and the Arrabbiati were preparing to attempt a revival of the old orgies, of the scandalous Medicean festivities, and, above all, of that game of stones to which they well knew the populace to be specially addicted. Thereupon Frà Domenico, being stirred to great wrath, determined to do his best to thwart their intent. He preached daily sermons, addressed epistles to the children,[1] and caused new regulations to be passed by the Signory enforcing the reforms initiated by Savonarola during the past year.[1]

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[1] Burlamacchi (at page 105) expressly states that Savonarola had first given a good turn to the children's minds, and then, "seeing the great change in those children, thought it well to furnish them with some rules, so that they might persevere in righteous living; and being unable to attend to the matter himself by reason of his weighty occupations, committed the care of it to Frà Domenico of Pescia; and the said Friar, frequently gathering the children together, continued to nourish their souls by short sermons of a devout and spiritual kind. *Vide* "Epistola di Frate Domenico mandata a' fanciulli Fiorentini," dated "Florentie in Sancto Marco die iii. Septembris MCCCCLXXXXVII.," and also a printed copy without indication of time or place.

We have already described the grand procession of the preceding Lent, when the children marched through the streets singing Girolamo Benivieni's hymn, and collecting considerable sums for the Monte di Pietà. But now, guided by their chiefs, they went about the city in bands, and, knocking at the doors of rich and poor, demanded the surrender of everything they styled *vanities* or *anathemæ*. These comprised all books or pictures of an indecent nature, carnival masks and costumes. On receipt of anything of this kind, they repeated a special prayer of Savonarola's composition, and passed on to the next house. In this way quantities of different objects were collected, intended to serve for a new festivity devised by Frà Domenico and Savonarola. In fact, on the last day of carnival (7th of February) there was no longer any thought of pagan orgies, and all were prepared for a religious solemnity. In the morning, men, women, and children attended a grand Mass celebrated by Savonarola, and all received the communion from his hands. After returning to their homes and taking a frugal meal, they all joined, at a later hour, in a grand procession through the town. First came, borne by four angels, a beautiful figure of the Infant Jesus, carved by Donatello, its left hand pointing to a crown of thorns, its right raised in the act of benediction. Close behind marched a prodigious train, some clothed in white, many bearing red crosses and chanting religious hymns and lauds. Alms-collectors went round with silver trays asking contributions for *St. Martin's good men*, who obtained more gold on that day than throughout the whole year. At last the procession reached the Piazza, where a great octangular pyramid had been built up, measuring about 60 feet in height, and 240 in circumference at the base. It was formed of seven stages,[1] on which all the different *vanities* collected during the carnival were arranged; the apex of the pile was crowned by a monstrous figure, supposed to personify the old King Carnival, and the interior of the structure was packed with combustibles. The Piazza was soon thronged with people, and the children being arranged on the Ringhiera outside the Palace and under the Loggia de' Lanzi, were continually employed in singing devotional songs and invectives against the carnival.[2] At a given signal the four guardians of the pile fired it at four points; smoke and flames instantly burst forth; the trumpeters of the Signory sounded a charge; the bells of the Palace pealed forth; and the multitude vented their joy in as mighty a shout as though the arch enemy of mankind were finally vanquished. Thus ended the procession and carnival of 1497.[3]

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[1] On the 25th of January, 1496 (common style), a provision was passed by the Consiglio Maggiore, laying down certain rules as to children's attire. Florence Archives, "Provvisioni, Registro," cl. ii. dist. ii, cod. 187, sheet 32ᵗ.

Of course, those who blamed all that was done by the direction or advice of Savonarola and the monks of St. Mark's did not refrain from inveighing against the destruction of the *vanities*, and declared that it would have been far better to have sold them for the benefit of the poor.[4] Strangely enough, the old historians barely allude to these accusations, and even in the almost numberless writings in favour or abuse of the Friar, in which every subject and fact was discussed lending itself to his attack or defence, this event was almost entirely passed over. But this has not been the case with modern writers.

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[1] Burlamacchi says there were fifteen, but Benivieni tells us they were seven in number, corresponding with the seven mortal sins.

[2] One of these, beginning, "Da che tu ci hai, Signore," was by G. Benivieni.

[3] Both the "Vita Latina," at sheet 32 and fol., and Burlamacchi, at p. 113 and fol., give a detailed account of this bonfire, which is also mentioned by contemporary biographers and historians.

[4] Nardi, vol. i. p. 114.

When the love for antiquities first began to revive, and then developed into so absorbing a passion, as almost to make it seem that men were born for the sole purpose of editing ancient manuscripts and restoring old pictures and monuments — the *Burning of the Vanities* became a theme of rhetorical display for all who treated of those times. Savonarola's name was loaded with abuse as that of a superstitious barbarian, the wilful destroyer of our ancient grandeur, and he was accordingly pourtrayed as a fanatic monk who sought to overwhelm the Renaissance with the gloom of the Middle Ages. If some old manuscript went astray, it was at once declared to have been burnt by Savonarola! If some edition of Boccaccio became specially scarce, every one was persuaded that the Friar had destroyed it![1] If an ancient statue chanced to be lost, of course the Piagnoni had reduced it to ashes at the *Burning of the Vanities.*

But what fire could have totally consumed marble statues; and was it credible that the children should have collected a whole edition of Boccaccio? Nevertheless, the subject was so excellent a peg for bursts of rhetoric, and so admirably in sympathy with the public feeling, that few could withstand the temptation of assuming the defence of our great monuments of antiquity, and making long speeches on the fatal effects of fanaticism. It should also be noted that the first, though innocent, author of these excesses was no other than Burlamacchi,[2] who, with a *naïveté* peculiar to himself, gave a lengthy, highly-coloured, and exaggerated account of the *Burning*, describing it as a thoroughly religious and Christian deed. Neither he nor any other of the old biographers seem able to say enough in praise of their hero's holy zeal. Nevertheless, Burlamacchi's words by no means serve to justify the extremes modern writers have indulged in, since among the many objects of more or less value described by the chronicler, there is not one of any definite or intrinsic worth.[1] But, at the end of his narrative, after having exultingly dilated on the number of works of art and volumes of the old poets comprised among the vanities, he finally says that a Venetian merchant having offered to buy them for the sum of 20,000 crowns, the man's portrait was put on top of the pile beside the image of the carnival, and burnt with all the rest. It was only natural that the offer of so large and, in those days, almost fabulous an amount, should have given free scope to men's fancy and led them to suppose that things of the most precious kind had been destroyed in the fire.

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[1] This was generally believed to be the fate of the Valdarfer edition of which only three copies are now known to exist. One of the three was sold in Paris in 1812 for the sum of 52,000 francs. *Vide* note to Nardi, vol. i. p. 140, Arbib. edition.

[2] It is needless to repeat that the same remarks apply to the "Vita Latina," of which Burlamacchi's Chronicle is an almost literal translation. I will only add that in the Latin original, after the words, "libri poetarum in utraque lingua," a marginal note is given, as if in correction—"et

Savonarola's friends and foes having shown—although from opposite motives—equal exaggeration on this point, it became very difficult to ascertain the exact truth. It was necessary to keep in mind that Burlamacchi, although very careful in the narration of events seen by himself or described to him by eye-witnesses, is always inaccurate and exaggerated in his figures. In speaking of the procession of the children, he makes their number almost equal that of the whole population of Florence; and esti-

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omnia impudica ad legendum" (sheet 40). The same exaggerated tone is maintained throughout the account, and always for the purpose of marking approval.

[1] In fact, the "Vita Latina" and Burlamacchi both name many objects, but always in general terms. It would seem that these were either clothes and masks, or portraits of notorious women, gold-decorated books, and similar things.

mates the sums of money collected by them at an altogether incredible amount. Then, too, his very inaccurate calculation of years and dates has been the principal cause of the confusion as to the events of Savonarola's life, and compelled us to refer to original documents for all chronological details. What value can then be assigned to judgments based on the calculations of so faulty a writer? By what process of logic can we blindly credit Burlamacchi's figures in this instance, when obliged to distrust him on so many other points? And is it at all probable that Savonarola would have been allowed, not only without opposition, but with general consent, to burn ancient statues, or valuable manuscripts, at a time when his fellow-countrymen were making long and hazardous journeys in quest of these treasures and devoting life and substance to their acquisition? How are we to believe that in the days of Marsilio Ficino and Angelo Poliziano, no voice should have been raised in his condemnation? For, were not the leading artists and scholars of the time still counted among the most fervent of his admirers? Is it in the least credible that Girolamo Benivieni, the poet and man of learning, would then have extolled the Burning, and written songs for the occasion; that Nardi, the translator of Livy and most ardent admirer of the ancients, should have made such slighting and contemptuous allusion to all who objected to it; or that a man of Guicciardini's stamp would have written so eulogistic an account of it?[1]

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[1] Guicciardini says: "His efforts for the enforcement of morality were most holy and admirable; nor was there ever so much goodness and religion in Florence as in his day; and after his death it was seen that every good thing that was done had been introduced and supported by him." And he adds, further on, that the children "went about during Carnival collecting cards, dice, cosmetics, paintings, and *indecent* books, and burnt them publicly on the Piazza of the Signoria, having first celebrated the precise day that was formerly one of numberless iniquities, by a very holy and pious procession" ("Storia Fiorentina," in the "Opere inedite," vol. iii. p. 179). Was Guicciardini ever known to be fanatically opposed to art and letters?

But, in stripping off the wild exaggerations with which it is overlaid, we have no intention of contesting the reality of the fact, and only seek to determine its precise value. We cannot exactly ascertain what were the *vanities* burnt on this occasion ; but they undoubtedly consisted for the most part of fancy dresses, masks, and other carnival accessories, inasmuch as the sole object of the bonfire was to suppress immorality, and abolish the game of stones and other festivities formerly carried on in Carnival. We are justified in thinking that, to mark his disapprobation of corrupt manners, Savonarola may have burnt a few volumes with indecent illustrations ; some copies of the Decameron, then the favourite reading, even of cloistered nuns ; and some of the more obscene poetical works then freely circulated among women and children, and against which he had energetically thundered from the pulpit. We cannot completely exonerate him on this head : but although the learned may lament the loss of some precious

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It should also be specially remarked that Girolamo Benivieni, an eye-witness of the *Burning*, makes no allusion, in his description of it, to the destruction of any manuscript or printed book. He speaks in general terms of "lewd, vain, and detestable things, . . . of various panels and canvases covered with precious but indecent paintings; of some casts and sculptures of considerable beauty." He adds, in a tone of great satisfaction, that these pictures and statues were calculated to be worth "several thousand ducats," and that he had held in his own hand "a painted head," for which ten ducats had been offered, and a chess-board, said to be worth forty ducats, without its men ; but he mentions no manuscripts. Finally, he says that, should any one regard this Burning as a childish affair, "let him, if a Christian, put off the spectacles of Satan's pride, and assume those of Christ's humility, before passing judgment" ("Comento di Hierony. B. sopra a più sue canzone e sonetti dello Amore et della Bellezza Divina," at sheet cxv. and fol. Printed in Florence, on the viii. day of September, MCCCC.).

A reprint of the "Canzona d'un Piagnone pel Bruciamento delle vanità, nel carnevale del 1498" (Florence, Grazzini, 1864), has been brought out by Professor del Lungo, who, in his preface, alludes to my words, agrees in my opinion on the subject, and remarks that this Canzone affords another proof that "the Piagnoni had no intention of destroying artistic marvels, some of which they themselves had helped to produce."

volumes, and the philosopher deplore the human weakness that often combats wrong by wrong, and old fanaticism by new, history reminds us that such has ever been the characteristic of men inspired by a great and excessive zeal for religion. Can we estimate the destruction wrought by the iconoclasts in the East, or the early Christians in Rome? Nor must the consideration of the highly-civilized times in which he lived make us judge Savonarola too harshly, when we see that in the following century neither churches nor pictures were spared by the far more relentless zeal of the image-breakers of Germany and Holland. Did not John Calvin live in the age of Leo X. and Francis I., and was he not a man of considerable culture, lofty genius, and iron strength of will? He too became the head of a republic, without, however, the merit of being its founder; and yet, while the declared champion of freedom and tolerance, he not only inflicted the severest punishments on all who committed blasphemy or worked on Sunday, but even cast women into prison for arranging their hair in an immodest fashion![1] Was it not he who, in the year 1553, had the innocent and ill-starred Servetus burnt to death at Geneva? It is no part of true historic criticism to put aside, when judging Savonarola, all remembrance of human passion and religious excitement.

But why stir sad memories of the past, all equally humiliating to humanity? It is needless to recall these instances of religious fanaticism in Savonarola's defence. Should the arguments we have alleged fail to show how unjustly he was accused of barbarous destruction, there is the evidence of facts in his favour; and one special fact occurring at the very time of the

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[1] In the Geneva Archives the Decree is still preserved by which a woman was sentenced to imprisonment, *parce qu'elle n'avait pas les cheveux abattus.*

Burning of the Vanities, will suffice to set the question at rest.

We have seen the financial straits to which the Republic had been lately reduced. It was totally unable to settle the numerous debts on the Medici's confiscated possessions. Accordingly it was first compelled to borrow heavily on them and then put them up to sale. Among these possessions was the celebrated library, a rare treasure of learning, which, after being deposited in the convent of St. Mark and subsequently in the Palace, was now exposed to the same fate. Even had any citizen of Florence been rich enough to buy it, he certainly would not have thrown it open to the public. And as private individuals were no less embarrassed than the State, there was imminent danger of this splendid collection being dispersed, and even of passing into foreign hands; since one of the numerous creditors of the Republic chanced to be no other than the French diplomat, Philippe de Commines, who was now pressingly demanding the payment of his claim for 1,000 florins. This danger was painfully appreciated by all men of culture. Who was then prayed to avert it? Who willingly came forward? No other than Savonarola, the notoriously barbaric destroyer of ancient manuscripts!

The convent of St. Mark was poor at this time, the friars having stripped themselves, by their superior's advice, of nearly all their possessions; nevertheless they contracted a loan, sold their remaining lands at Pian di Mugnone, and by the payment in October, 1495, of 2,000 florins—an enormous sum for those days—received the famous library in deposit for a year. By the terms of the contract, if the money were not repaid in the course of that period the friars would be authorized to reimburse themselves by selling part of the collection. In reality this was their first step towards buying it outright, and meanwhile they set to work to recover all the scattered manuscripts, some of which had been lent or otherwise dispersed.[1] Savonarola considered that the credit of the convent and its remaining property could be devoted to no better use. By the purchase of this precious collection he saved it from dispersion and from the danger of falling into alien hands; and by placing it in the convent library—the only one then open to the public—he could not only render a service to Florence, but at the same time help to tide the State over its financial embarrassments. And when, as he had foreseen, the government proved unable to restore the money at the end of the year, he began to negotiate for the purchase of the library by offering another thousand florins to Philippe de Commines, for the payment of which Bernardo Nasi became guarantee.[2] A contract to this effect was signed in January, 1498. This affair was accordingly going on during the years in which the Medicean carnival gaieties were suppressed and the first (1497) and second (1498) burning of the Vanities performed. Here, then, is historical proof that the supposed enemy of the ancients, the barbarous destroyer of manuscripts and works of art, not only devoted the last remnant of his convent's property, but likewise burdened the community with a very heavy debt, in order to preserve to art and science the marvellous collection of Greek and Latin codices and the unrivalled treasure of miniatures still contained in the Laurentian Library.[1]

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[1] *Vide* Professor Piccolomini's work, quoted elsewhere. At the end of the Inventory given in his book, there was a list of the Codices *recuperati per fratres.*

[2] *Vide* Ubaldini, "Cronica di San Marco," sheet 18: "Fratres etiam nostri, considerantes quod ordo prædicatorum decore fulgeret si remanerent in domibus nostris libri prædicti; videntes augustiam Dominorum, qui quærebant unde pecuniam comparare sibi pro publicis necessitatibus Civitatis, et quomodo cogerentur illos tradere pro modica quantitate . . . cum fratribus tunc pecuniæ deessent, decretum . . . est ut eas mutuarent et libros penes se retinerent."

But the strength of our Friar's interest in ancient

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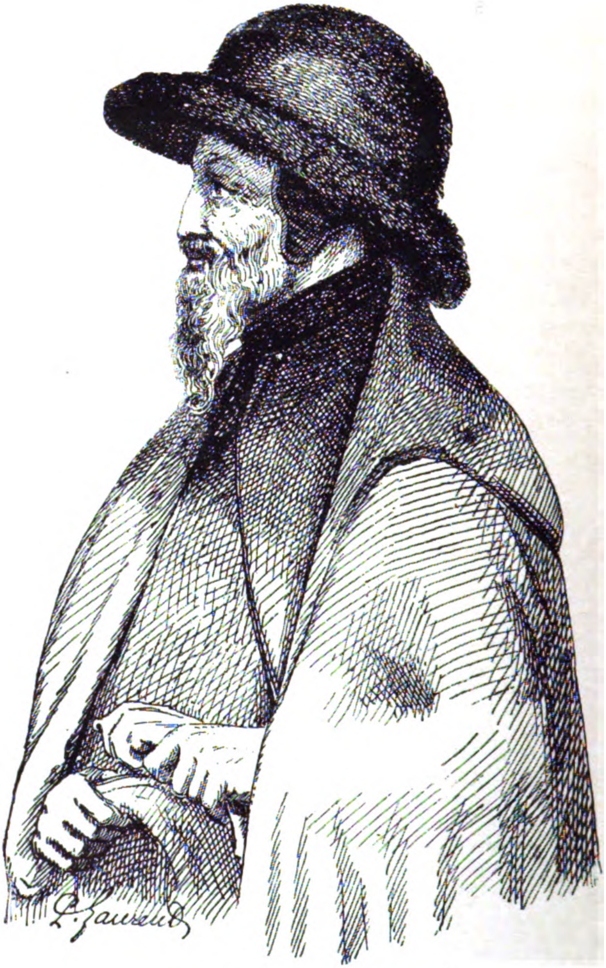
[1] The following notices may be added to what we have said elsewhere concerning the Library of St. Mark's. Niccolò Niccoli having bequeathed to the public his famous collection of about six hundred ancient codices, Cosimo de' Medici paid the debts by which it was burdened, and retaining two hundred volumes for his own use, consigned the rest to St. Mark's. He and Lorenzo afterwards enlarged their collection; and their efforts in this direction are so generally known that it would be idle to recapitulate them. The friars of St. Mark's were no less energetic; for, as may be seen by a public document, formerly preserved among the convent MSS. (now nearly all removed to the Laurentian Library), they paid, on the 10th of December, 1445, the sum of 250 florins for the purchase of MSS., and continued to make fresh acquisitions down to Savonarola's day, when they became possessed of the Medici Library in the manner described. All particulars of the sale of the Library are derived from the numerous documents in the Florence Archives. We also referred to the "Cronica di San Marco," and the depositions made at Savonarola's trial by the librarian, Frà Roberto degli Ubaldini da Gagliano, and added the latter to the other documents concerning the purchase of MSS. *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxxiv.

In 1872 Dr. N. Anziani, then vice-librarian of the Laurentian Library, published a work entitled "Della Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana." Florence: Tofani, 1872, containing many useful particulars. Finally Professor Piccolomini produced a work, first appearing in the "Archivio Storico Italiano, S. T., 1874-75, and then in a separate form, that may be said to be exhaustive, and is entitled "Intorno alle condizioni ed alle vicende della libreria Medicea privata." Florence: Cellini, 1875. This work comprised all the documents given in our Appendix (to the Italian edition), together with others we had left aside, and with the addition of many discovered by himself, some of which are of so valuable a nature that it would be difficult to add any fresh information.

It may not be superfluous to remind the reader that after Savonarola's death one of the numerous acts of persecution directed against the convent consisted in depriving it under false pretences of all the books belonging to the Medici collection. In October, 1500, they were restored under fresh conditions, and at last, in 1508, the community being burdened with debts, and Savonarola, the careful preserver of the books, being no longer alive, the collection was sold to Galeotto Franciosi, the agent of Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, afterwards Leo X. Thus it went to Rome, and again returned thence to Florence. Bandini, "Lettera sopra i collettori di codici orientali, esistenti nella insigne Basilica Laurenziana; Annales conventus S. Marci" (frequently quoted by us under the title of "Cronica di San Marco," and also under that of Ubaldini), at sheets 18, 22, 23, 26, 28; Padre Marchese, "Storia del convento di San Marco," p. 46 and fol.; Piccolomini, op. cit.



MICHELANGIOLO BUONAROTTI.

manuscripts in no way lessened his admiration for the fine arts. Did he not found the school of design in St. Mark's, and insist that his novices should practise the arts in order to provide for the necessities of the convent without having recourse to charity? Was he not continually surrounded by a chosen band of the best artists of his age? All the world knows the ardent affection he had inspired in Frà Bartolommeo della Porta, who, for four years after his master's death, was unable to resume the brush.[1] All the Della Robbia were devoted to Savonarola, two of them received the monastic robe from his hands, and the family long preserved a traditional reverence for his name. Concerning Lorenzo di Credi, Vasari tells us that "he was a partisan of Frà Girolamo's sect," and relates of Cronaca, "that he had conceived so great a frenzy for Savonarola's teachings, that he could talk of nothing else;" and he says the same of Sandro Botticelli, whom he numbers among those who illustrated the Friar's works with beautiful engravings. But it is enough to mention the name of Michelangiolo Buonarotti, known to be one of his most constant hearers, and who, in his old age, constantly read and re-read the Friar's sermons, and never forgot the potent charm of that orator's gestures and voice.[2] When labouring on the ramparts of San Miniato al Monte in defence of the resuscitated Republic in 1529–30, the sculptor proved how well he had profited by the master's teachings.

In fact, the manifest injustice of the charges of hostility to the fine arts alleged against Savonarola, moved an eloquent French writer to assume his defence. But unfortunately he, too, was led by an excessive admiration for his hero, undue love of system and religious zeal, to exceed the bounds of truth, and thus neutralize the effect of his earnest vindication. He persisted in regarding Savonarola almost as a leader of Italian painting, a reviver of that which he styled *Christian art*, as distinguished from pagan or *naturalistic art*.[1] In this way he transformed all the artists who had been admirers of the Friar into so many disciples of a supposed school, that, even had he possessed the necessary aptitude, Savonarola could neither have had the opportunity nor the leisure to establish, seeing that, as he himself so often declared, the absorbing agitations of his political and religious life compelled him to neglect all other studies and occupations.

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[1] Vasari records that Frà Bartolommeo added several of his own sketches from the nude to the pile of the "Vanities." If this be true, the blame of the deed must fall on the painter; but we must not forget that Vasari lived a century after Savonarola, always wrote of him in a hostile spirit, and was not very favourable to the memory of Frà Bartolommeo.

[2] See, too, Harford's "Life of Michael Angelo Buonarotti," already quoted by us, and in which special attention is given to the relations between Buonarotti and Savonarola.

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[1] Rio, Art Chrétien. The latter school, according to Rio, is merely a degraded form of the only true art: the Christian art. Taking it for granted that in the fifteenth century both schools were equally flourishing, he attributed the progress of *naturalism* to the Medici through their encouragement of classical and pagan ideas; and to Savonarola the revival of Christian art. But although he is quite right in thinking that Savonarola promoted Christian ideas in opposition to the Medici, by whom classical learning was used as an instrument of intellectual advance and moral corruption, it is equally certain that Rio's theories cannot withstand the test of facts. On turning to the painters who flocked round Savonarola, we shall find that none of them was an exclusive follower of Mons. Rio's so-called Christian art. Frà Bartolommeo was the foremost of these painters. Yet, was he not one of the first, if not the first of all, to lead painting into a decidedly classical groove, and to inaugurate the Cinquecento school of art? And did not Michelangiolo Buonarotti push this school to its farthest extreme? It is true that we find the Della Robbia among Savonarola's admirers; but Luca della Robbia, the immortal sculptor of so many Virgin Mothers, was already dead, and had lived with Frà Beato Angelico, in the days of Cosimo de' Medici. Another follower of Savonarola, Cronaca, was one of the first to start the school of classic architecture, and of this we have a good proof in the Hall of the Conciglio Maggiore. Lorenzo di Credi is known to all as the disciple and even imitator of Leonardo da Vinci; while as to Sandro Botticelli, Mons. Rio tells us that he was "infected with the pagan spirit." What, therefore, becomes of the school of Christian art founded by Savonarola, when all his followers are seen to have taken the opposite path in art, designated by Mons. Rio as the naturalistic school and when it is proved beyond doubt that the writer's so-called Christian art was far more flourishing in the time of Cosimo de' Medici?

Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that Mons. Rio was one of the first to appreciate the moral contrast between Savonarola and the Medici, and to give a vivid and even eloquent account of it. His blunders, though neither few nor slight, proceed from his superficial knowledge of history, and his resolve to attribute every progress in art to exclusively religious causes. Thus his work has a polemical rather than an historical character.

In point of fact the Christian ideal of art, as conceived by Beato Angelico and his contemporaries, was in its decline in Savonarola's day. The artist-friends who best loved him studied from nature and the antique, tended towards classicism, and were in danger of losing sight of the sacred ideal so fervently urged by their master as essential to the new art. And the need of this ideal being more widely recognized than is generally thought, by the Italian scholars and artists of the period, they were all fired with enthusiasm for the preacher who taught them that the Renaissance neither might nor could suppress Christianity. Thus, while regarded by sceptics and pedants as one bent on reviving the past, Savonarola was held by great souls of Michelangiolo's stamp to be, as he truly was, the precursor of a new era, in which the power of Christianity would again be revived, without prejudice to nature or antiquity.

But at this point the nature of our subject leads us to an inquiry into Savonarola's ideas on the beautiful, which indeed constituted neither a small nor insignificant part of his doctrines. The Friar's mind ranged over a vast domain of thought; his philosophy embraced the entire *scibile*, and everything on which he turned his glance inspired him with new and original conceptions. We will first give a few ideas culled from his sermons. "In what does beauty consist? In colour? No. In form? No! Beauty is born of the correspondence of parts and colours; . . . this as regards composite things: the beauty of simple things is in their light. Behold the sun and the stars, their beauty is in the light they shed; behold the spirits of the blessed, their beauty consists of light; behold God is light! He is beauty itself! . . .[1] Thus the beauty of man and woman is the greater and more perfect the more resemblance it hath to primary beauty. What, then, is this beauty? It is a quality resulting from the proportion and correspondence of the members and parts of the body. Thou dost not call a woman beautiful on account of her beautiful nose and beautiful hands, but when all is in harmony. What is the source of this beauty? On investigation thou wilt see that it emanates from the soul. . . .[2] Now take two women of equal beauty; let one be good, modest, and pure; the other a prostitute: thou wilt see the good one shine with an almost angelic beauty, and that the other, however handsome she may be, is in no way comparable with the good and virtuous woman. . . .[3] Thou wilt see that this holy one will be dearer to every one, and that all eyes, even those of carnal-minded men, will be attracted to her."[4]

"And the reason of this is because the untainted soul shares the beauty of God, and lends its Divine charm to the body. We read concerning the Virgin, that her great beauty struck all who looked on her with amazement, but that she was so encircled by a halo of sanctity, as to excite impure desire in no man, all, on the contrary, holding her in reverence." This gave Savonarola an opportunity to address his female hearers, and censure their attention to outward and material beauty while neglecting the spiritual beauty that alone had any value in his eyes. "Ye women that glory in your finery, in your hair and your hands, I tell ye that ye are all hideous! Would ye behold true beauty? . . . Note some devout person, either male or female, that hath the Divine spirit; note him, I say, when engaged in prayer, and in the flush of Divine beauty and on his return from prayer; then will ye see the beauty of God reflected in his face, and his countenance almost as that of an angel."[1] He then turned to the artists, who in painting the Virgin and the saints, not only delighted in representing varied fashions of attire, but instead of seeking to express the nobility and holiness of some elevated and sublime type, frequently gave portraits of persons notorious for their evil life and indecent and scandalous habits. "And these young men go about saying of this woman and that—Here is a Magdalen, here a Virgin, there a St. John; and then ye paint their faces in the churches, the which is a great profanation of Divine things. Ye painters do very ill; and did ye know, as I know, the scandal ye cause, ye would certainly act differently. . . . Ye fill the churches with vain things; think ye that the Virgin should be painted, as ye paint her? I tell ye that she went clothed as a beggar."[2]

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[1] "Prediche sopra Amos e Zaccaria." Sermon of Friday after the third Sunday in Lent.

[2] Sermon xxviii., on Ezekiel.

[3] Sermon iii., on Haggai.

[4] "Prediche sopra Amos e Zaccaria." Sermon of Friday after the third Sunday in Lent.

These ideas, which are frequently met with in Savonarola's sermons, form an integral part of his system. His great aim was to ensure the triumph of Christianity and religion; and therefore, in art and morals, in politics and everything else, he steadily kept this purpose in view. But for a deeper knowledge of his æsthetic principles, we must turn to a little work of his upon poetry. The idea of it was conceived in the following way. Carried away by the heat of his eloquence Savonarola often indulged in severe and perhaps excessive condemnation of licentious poets and the use made of their works by contemporary preachers, who filled their sermons with quotations from writers of this kind, and especially from those of the heathen world. This gave rise to many murmurs, and although his own poems were well known to all, his adversaries proclaimed him hostile to poets and poetry in general. Thereupon the famous scholar, Ugolino Verino, then a great admirer of Savonarola (although afterwards his betrayer) sent him a Latin epistle, accompanied by some verses in praise of religion. He spoke of poetry in his letter, declaring that he agreed with Savonarola as to the benefit to be derived from true poets, and the evil caused by obscene writers and undue admiration of Paganism.[1] He seemed to wish to lead the Friar to a clearer explanation of his own ideas, and thus refute the calumnies of his opponents. And it was then that Savonarola published his little work on the "Division and Utility of all the Sciences," one portion of which is entitled : "In Apology of the Art of Poetry."[1] The aim of the author was to prove that he despised no element of human knowledge, but sought to give each its due rank. But having spoken elsewhere of the division of the sciences adopted by the Friar,[2] we need only here explain the portion of the work devoted to poetry, in order to settle the point in discussion by means of the author's own words.

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[1] Sermon xxviii., on Ezekiel.

[2] "Prediche sopra Amos e Zaccaria." *Vide* that of Saturday following the second Sunday in Lent

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[1] Verino is known as the author of a poem in three books: "De Illustratione Urbis Florentine." His Latin letter and verses mentioned above, have been published in Gherardi's "Nuovi Documenti," p. 184 and fol. After citing various instances and authorities in favour of true poetry, Verino adds: "Ut ad Poeticem redeam, non opinor te a nostra sententia discrepare: egregios poetas gravibus plurimum prodesse sententiis, et elegantia et structura verborum valde delectare lectores; malos vero ac lascivos ut pestem esse vitandos, quod male abutantur tam clara dicendi facultate. . . . O impudentiam singularem, Iovem quam Christum, thyrsum quam Crucem, Iunonem et Bacchum quam Mariam et Johannem malunt nominare . . . Da veniam temeritati: haec non ideo scripsi, ut Poeticæ exhibeam patrocinium, sed illos pariter increparem qui ea male abutuntur, et tuæ detrahunt sanctitati: posse etiam salva stili dignitate, deserte et ornate poema confingi de christiana felicitate. Vale." This letter clearly proves the nature of Savonarola's real opinions on the subject. Signor Gherardi believes it to have been written in 1491, since the author mentions having witnessed three years before the performance in Florence of the Menechmi of Plautus, and one of these performances is known to have been given in 1488. It is impossible to discover the exact date of the work Savonarola wrote in reply; but we believe it was written before the year 1494.

Accordingly Savonarola begins with a letter to Verino, in which he says : "I have never been minded to condemn the art of verse, but only the abuse made of it by many,[3] although not a few have sought to calumniate me in their speech and their writings. For, in truth, it was my purpose to pay no heed to these things, in pursuance of the precept : never to answer a fool according to his folly ; but now thy words force me to take up the pen. But thou must not expect me to write elegantly, since for the last twenty years I have neglected all the humanities for other and graver pursuits." After this short preamble, he enters into the main question, by first drawing a distinction between the form and substance of poetry. "By some it is held to consist solely of form ; but in this they are greatly deceived : the essence of poetry consists in philosophy and thought, since without these no man can be a true poet. And should any one believe that the art of poetry only teaches dactyles and spondees, long or short syllables, and verbal flourishes, he is undoubtedly in great error."[4] He then proceeds to give a definition of poetry on thoroughly scholastic principles, but quickly changing his tone, enounces more original ideas: "The purpose of poetry," he says, "is to persuade by means of the syllogism called an example, expressed in elegant language, in order to convince and delight at the same time. And inasmuch as our soul finds sovereign pleasure in songs and harmonies, so the ancients contrived the art of metrical arrangement, the better by this means to urge men to virtue. But this metre is purely conventional, and the poet can deal with his theme without the aid of metre or rhyme.[1] This is proved by the Holy Scriptures, to which the Lord hath given the true poetry of wisdom, the genuine eloquence of the spirit of truth; thus instead of feeding men's minds with the husk of words, they instantly imbue them with the spirit, show them the essence of truth, and give marvellous nourishment to all that are free from earthly vanities. For verily what serveth an eloquence that never achieveth its proposed end? What serveth a painted and decorated bark, that is always struggling with the waves, never bearing its passengers nearer the port, but always moving farther away from it? What profiteth it to the soul, merely to tickle the ears of the multitude, praise oneself as a divinity, mouth lauds of the philosophers, and sing poets' verses out of tune, while forsaking or barely remembering the gospel of Jesus Christ!"[2]

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[1] "Opus perutile de divisione ac utilitate omnium scientiarum : in poeticea apologeticus." Venetiis, 1542. There is also a fifteenth-century edition without indication of time and place.

[2] *Vide* bk. i. chap. vi.

[3] "Nec ego aliquando artem poeticam damnandam putavi sed quorumdam abusum" ("Epistola ad Verinum," at the beginning of the treatise : "Apologeticus de ratione poeticæ artis," p. 4. Venetiis, 1542).

[4] "Si quis credit artem poeticam solum docere dactylos et spondæos, syllabas longas, et breves, ornatumque verborum, magno profecto errore tenetur" ("Apologeticus," &c., p. 39).

After speaking in this way of poetry in general, he next treats of the poets of his own day. "There is," he says, "a false race of pretended poets, who can do nought but run after the Greeks and Romans, repeating their ideas, copying their style and their metre; and even invoking the same deities, almost as though we were not men as much as they, with reason and religion of our own.[1] Now this is not only false poetry, but likewise a most hurtful snare to our youth. Were this not already as clear as sunlight, I would labour to prove it: experience, the only teacher of all things, having so plainly manifested to all eyes the evils born of this false kind of poetry, that it is needless to pause to condemn it.[2] And what shall we say, on finding that even the Pagans condemned poets such as these? Did not Plato himself, whom nowadays all extol to the skies, declare the necessity of making a law for the expulsion from the city of all poets, who by the example and authority of most iniquitous deities, and the allurements of most shameful verse, filled the world with ignominious lust and moral destruction? Why do our Christian rulers make no sign? Why do they dissemble these ills? Why do they not pass a law banishing from the city not these false poets only, but even their works, and those of the ancient writers treating of vicious subjects, and in praise of false gods? It would be an excellent thing were such books destroyed, and only those inciting to virtue preserved." [3]

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[1] "Potest enim poeta uti argumento suo, et per decentes similitudines discurrere sine versu" ("Apologeticus," &c., p. 38).

[2] Ibid. pp. 45–48.

These were the utterances, some of which are certainly unduly severe, serving as the basis of many of the charges alleged against Savonarola. We have given them in full, the better and more clearly to show how, after all that had passed, even after the proofs he had given of his regard for the treasures of ancient and modern art, what a handle these expressions gave to his enemies, and how he was betrayed into them by his indignation against those who profaned the beautiful, while feigning to be its ministers. The intemperance of his language was justified at the moment by the corruption of a time, in which the true, vigorous and noble poetry of Dante Alighieri, was neglected in the general craving for and delight in obscenities. "Nevertheless," continued Savonarola, "even among the ancients, there be some that condemned vicious things, and extolled the generous deeds of great men: by these, poetry was turned to good use, and I have neither the right nor the wish to condemn them."[1] But then he adds with fresh excitement, "even the best of these heathen poets should only be studied after a strong and healthy Christian training. Let them accordingly be kept from the eyes of the young until the latter have been first nourished on evangelical doctrines, and had them firmly impressed on their tender minds. It is a matter of no slight importance to give a good direction to their first training; but rather of great, and the greatest importance, since the beginning is more than half of the work. For my part, I hold it better to see Christians adorned with good morals but scanty eloquence, rather than see them rendered unworthy of the name of Christ by the brilliancy of their eloquence."[2]

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[1] Having given this passage word for word in an earlier chapter, we only give a summary of it here.

[2] "Modus autem artis, quem nunc nostri poetæ servant, . . . hoc est metrorum ac fabularum, laudumque Deorum, adolescentibus pestis est perniciosissima. Et certe ad hoc probandum laborarem, nisi sole clarius appareret. *Experientia ipsa, rerum magistra*, ita nostris oculis mala quæ ex perverso usu poeticæ artis eveniunt manifestat, ut non oporteat in probatione sudare" ("Apologeticus," &c., p 53).

[3] "Apologeticus," &c., p. 54.

In conclusion, he speaks of the benefit that poetry may confer on religion, and says: Were a poet only to sing the praises of religion, he might certainly do it honour, but would be of no real service to it. Unless vivified by the spirit, the letter kills; the honour and glory sought by the poet always consist in the art he employs, rather than in the subject treated by him. How, then, can he serve religion, before which all other human interests are as nought? The example of a poor, simple, ignorant woman kneeling in earnest prayer doeth more good to mankind than all the poets and philosophers who celebrate the Lord's praise with pompous declamation; for whereas the woman's heart is warmed by faith, these men's minds are full of worldly vanity."[1]

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[1] "Verum quidam, non amatoria, non laudes idolorum, non turpia, sed virorum fortium gesta atque moralia versibus descripserunt, et bene usi sunt arte poetica et modo eius: hos igitur damnare nec possum nec debeo" ("Apologeticus," &c., p. 55).

[2] "Ego melius puto Christianos, moribus ornatos, minore fulgere eloquentia, quam propter eloquentiam Christi nomen perdere" ("Apologeticus," &c., p. 55).

Undoubtedly, this will be regarded by many as too exclusive a mode of investigating the subject; nevertheless it appertains to a sounder method of criticism than might be supposed at first sight. Art, it is true, lives in a world of its own, in which it finds its own end, and is sufficient to itself. Those who in seeking to elevate it, have tried to use it as an instrument for some moral, political, or religious end, have always reduced it to the level of prose. No picture, poem, or musical work has ever become immortal through being composed for a purpose, no matter how noble or generous that purpose may have been, whereas numerous works, conceived for no very laudable aim, have lasted through many centuries. Hence Savonarola showed no inadequacy in his conception of art, when distinguishing it so clearly from morality and religion; but, on the contrary, proved that he had grasped its true nature. Where he erred, was in allowing too little for the ennobling effect of mental culture on the soul, and the refinement of mind acquired in the realms of art. Being at that time solely dominated by religious ideas, he was over jealous in his attacks on the philosophical studies in which he was himself so well versed, and on the poetical art once so dear to him. But in deploring his intemperance on this point, we must not forget that there were many celebrated scholars and philosophers in those days, who seriously looked forward to the revival of Paganism, and others who believed themselves to have attained the summit of art by the shameless indecencies they had strung together in Virgilian verse or Ciceronian prose. On the other hand, it was a great mistake to believe Savonarola insensible to the sublime symphonies of true art, or to the secret harmony of the beautiful. Was it not philosophy that had given him strength and courage to bear the cruel trials of his youth? Had not music and poetry served as a solace and vent to his earliest griefs? His verses prove him to have been no unworthy disciple of the arts which he was now held to despise. For, although his compositions may not always rise to the rank of true poetry, they all show a special originality and elevation of thought, and are therefore valuable proofs of the nobility of their author's mind. Some space must accordingly be given to their examination.

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[1] This idea is not only enounced in the above-mentioned work, but continually reiterated in the sermons.

Although exclusively on religious themes, these verses are to be divided into two distinct classes, and they strangely confirm Savonarola's declared views on the nature of poetry and its various forms. Most of the *Canzoni* were written in his youth, before he had fled from the world, while he was still ardently devoted to letters, and only wrote to give vent to his innermost feelings. But his more numerous *Laudi Spirituali* were composed at a riper age, with the exclusively religious purpose of overthrowing the *Canti Carnascialeschi* which were then so popular in Florence. These Lauds are altogether outside the field of genuine art; for their metre, form and even almost their ideas are suggested and determined by the very species of poetry they were meant to supersede. The author set them to the same music as the

Carnival Songs, and followed the same arrangement, while trying to substitute a word of faith or religion for every one of their lewd expressions. Hence, having voluntarily stretched himself on this bed of Procustes, he is forced by his very antagonism to imitate lines which are often poor in idea and full of artificial conceits, and is driven to unworthy verbal devices and subterfuges. Accordingly we cannot be surprised at the absence of true poetry in these Lauds, but rather that they should often show a certain amount of temperance, decorum, and good sense. When Girolamo Benivieni, a famous poet in his own day, attempted the same style, he frequently passed the limits, not only of art, but of common sense; and in singing the joy and delight of growing mad for love of Christ,[1] ventured to apply the name of poetry to the following lines:—

To' tre once almen di speme,
Tre di fede e sei d'amore,
Due di pianto, e poni insieme
  Tutto al foco del timore:
Fa' dipoi bollir tre ore;
Premi in fine, e aggiungi tanto
D'umiltate e dolor, quanto
Basta a far questa pazzia.[2]

Compared with effusions such as these, Savonarola's Lauds seem resplendently good, for at least they are more simply conceived, have more spontaneity of feeling, and a more practical, moral, and loftier aim. We subjoin the first verses of one composed in the same year in which the new government was formed.

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[1] *Vide* "Poesie" by Girolamo Benivieni. Florence, 1500.
Ognun gridi, com' io grido:
Sempre pazzo, pazzo, pazzo.
("Let all cry, as I cry; mad, mad, for ever mad.")

[2] "Poesie" of Girolamo Benivieni:—"Take of hope at least three ounces, three of faith, and six of love, then two of hope, and set all to boil on the fire of fear: Let them boil three hours, and lastly squeeze and add enough humility and grief to create this madness."

Viva, viva in nostro core
Cristo re, duce e signore.

Ciascun purghi l'intelletto,
La memoria e volontade,
Del terrestre e vano affetto;
Arda tutto in caritade,
Contemplando la bontade
Di Iesù re di Fiorenza;
Con digiuni e penitenza
Si riformi dentro e fore.

Se volete, Iesù regni,
Per sua grazia in vostro core,
Tutti gli odii e pravi sdegni
Commutate in dolce amore;
Discacciando ogni rancore,
Ciascun prenda in sè la pace:
Questo è quel che a Iesù piace,
Su nel cielo e qui nel core.[1]

Of the many Lauds composed by Savonarola, some have remained unpublished to the present day; but these latter add nothing to his reputation as a poet, since besides having all the defects common to the rest, they were never revised by their author, and have been preserved in their original rough, fragmentary, and extremely incorrect form.[1]

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[1] This Laud is the fifth in the collection of Savonarola's poems published by Audin, and is entitled "Canzona ai Fiorentini." Literally translated, it runs thus: "Live, O live in our heart, Christ our king and chief and lord. Let each one purge his mind and memory and will, of earthly and vain affections; let him burn with charity, in contemplating the loving kindness of Jesus, king of Florence; Let each one purify himself within and without by fasting and penitence. If ye would have Jesus reign by His grace in your hearts, change all your hate and evil wrath into tender love; casting forth all rancour, let each dwell in peace. This is that which is pleasing to Jesus, in heaven above and here in our hearts."

But whenever Savonarola shakes off the fetters and bonds imposed by the theme of the Lauds; whenever his verses are no longer made to serve an aim with which poetry has no concern, and whenever his words flow freely and spontaneously from his heart, then he, too, has the right to say: I also am a poet. We find many proofs of this in the Canzoni, which, as we have said, were nearly all written in early youth, while he was still wrestling with earthly passions, and as yet unabsorbed in the spiritual delights, which inspired him with so excessive a contempt for the world. In the two Canzoni, "De ruina Ecclesiæ" and "De ruina Mundi," we already find much rough vigour and an energetic, though careless style of versification. In others, on the contrary, we meet with great delicacy of feeling, expressed with a certain amount of elegance, as may be seen by certain portions of the Canzone, beginning thus:

Quando il soave e mio fido conforto,
Per la pietà della mia stanca vita,
Con la sua dolce citara fornita
Mi trae da l'onde al suo beato porto,
Io sento al core un ragionare accorto.[2]

The same may be said of the Canzone addressed to

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[1] Some of these Lauds were published for the first time in the first edition of these works. We derived them from the original manuscript possessed by Count Giberto Borromeo of Genoa, and explained that they were rough, unrevised drafts. They are reprinted in the Appendix to the present (Italian) edition (doc. xxxv.), but we must remind the reader that they were republished, together with the rest of the Lauds in 1862, by Commendatore C. Guasti and Count C. Capponi. "Poesie di Frà Girolamo Savonarola tratte dall' autografo." Florence: Cecchi, 1862.

[2] "When my gentle and faithful comforter, in pity of my weary life, furnished with his sweet citara (lute), draws me from the flood of his blessed port, I feel a subtle reasoning in my heart."

Mary Magdalen,[1] in which he describes with much feeling how the saint was borne to heaven by Jesus Christ :

E tutto il suo cor arde
E nell' amor di Dio non si raffrena.[2]

But to give a good idea of these compositions, we subjoin in full a Canzone written in praise of Caterina de' Vegri, who was born in 1463, and afterwards canonized as a saint by the Roman Curia in 1724.

I.

Anima bella, che le membra sante,
Salendo al ciel, abbandonasti in terra,
Per far fede fra noi dell' altra vita ;
Or ch' è fornita pur la lunga guerra,
Ove giammai non fusti isbigottita,
Ni mai voltasti al Sposo tuo le piante,
    Sei gita a lui davante
Col cor pudico e con la mente pura
Per trionfar della tua gran vittoria,
    In sempiterna gloria,
Fuor di quest' aspra e cieca vita dura,
Là dove ormai con Cristo sei secura.

II.

Il sacro corpo ben dimostra quanto
Esaltata t'ha Iddio nell' alto cielo,
E la virtude che fra noi si vede,
Spirto gentil, esempio al mondo felo,
Fiamma celeste alle coscienze frede,
E degli afflitti, o refrigerio santo !
    Chi con devoto pianto
A te s'inchina, Vergine beata,
Sciolto riman da mille pensier frali ;
    Perchè quanto tu vali
Dinanzi a Cristo, o sposa coronata,
Il ciel il vede, e 'l mondo ove sei nata.

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[1] This is No. xiii. of Audin's collection ; No. xii. is also addressed to the same saint, but is a very inferior work.

[2] "And all her heart is on fire, and she freely pours out her love of God."

III.

Da mille parti, sol per fama core
Diverse genti a rimirar le membra,
Che, essendo spente, par che viva ancora,
E del suo spirto par che si rimembra.[1]
Ogn' uomo il vede, quivi ogn' uom l'adora,
E pien di maraviglia gli fa onore.
Deh! qual selvaggio core
Non lacrimasse forte di dolcezza,
Vedendo l'opre sante e l'umil viso?
Se adunque è un paradiso
Il corpo al mondo, e tanto qui si prezza,
Che fia a veder di spirto la bellezza?
O felice alma, che giammai non torse
Il santo piè dal dritto suo cammino,
Sempre sprezzando quel che 'l mondo brama![2]

Unless we are mistaken this Canzone shows an exquisite refinement and delicacy of feeling. But in general, it must be confessed, that were we to regard the Friar's poetical compositions solely from the artistic point of view, we should often be compelled to judge them most severely, since nearly all are very defective in style, and their motive seldom reaches the height of real poetic creation. Nevertheless we cannot read these works without an increased esteem for their author, since we are impressed by the true poetry of his nature even when he fails to express it in his verse; for in his case, this is an integral portion of the soul rather than a product of the mind. It is true that this poetic spirit is only seen in occasional flashes; but is all the more luminous owing to the author's apparent unconsciousness.

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[1] It would be an arduous task to correct the grammatical errors of this strophe, although it is not without merit.

[2] "Fair soul, whose holy limbs have soared to heaven and fled the earth, to teach us faith in the future life; now the long combat is done, in which thy courage never failed, nor didst thou ever turn thy back on thy Bridegroom, thou art now gone to His presence, to rejoice with modest heart and pure mind in the triumph of thy victory, in everlasting glory; removed from this blind, harsh, and unkind world, and art now safe with the Lord on high. Thy holy body well showeth how the Lord had chosen thee for His own, and the virtue thou didst manifest here below. O gentle spirit, wast an example to the wicked world, a celestial fire to lukewarm hearts, and a holy refuge to the afflicted! He that bows before thee, O sainted virgin, with pious tears, is delivered from all frail thoughts; for heaven sees thee, and the world that gave thee birth, in thy true place, a crowned bride in the company of Christ Jesus. From a thousand parts, drawn by thy fame, the peoples flock to gaze on the form that, dead though it be, seems still to live and be renewed by the spirit within. All men see this, all men therefore adore it, and full of marvel come to do it homage. What heart, howsoever fierce, could fail to shed rivers of sweet tears on beholding thy holy works and humble countenance? If, therefore, even thy body seemeth a paradise in this world, and is so valued here, what were it not to see the beauty of thy spirit? Thou happy soul, that never turned thy holy steps from the true path, but ever despised all that is cherished of the world!" This Canzone, No. iii. of the Audin edition, seems to have been left unfinished.

Some other Latin compositions of Savonarola's pen may also be classed as poetry, for although devoid of metrical form, they are modelled on the Psalms. One of these, celebrating the praises of the Lord, runs as follows: "I sought Thee everywhere, but found Thee not. I asked of the earth: Art thou my God? And the earth answered: Thales is deceived; I am not thy God. I questioned the air, and the air replied: Thou must go higher. I questioned the heavens, the stars, and the sun, and all made reply: He that created us from nothing He is thy God; He filleth heaven and earth, He dwelleth in thy heart. Thus, O Lord, I had sought Thee afar, and Thou wert near. I asked of my eyes whether Thou hadst entered in through them, but they answered that they only knew colours. I asked my ear, and it answered that it only knew sound. Wherefore the senses know Thee not, O Lord; Thou hast entered into my soul, Thou dwellest in my heart, and workest in me when I do deeds of charity."[1] Thus in all that Savonarola wrote we find a spiritual tendency; some noble and holy aspiration piercing the often rebellious husk of form to show us his moral greatness, and prove that, if seldom a poet, he was ever a fit theme for poetry of the highest kind.

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[1] *Vide* "Alcuni devotissimi trattati," &c. Venice, 1537.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTERS I.—XI.

(1497-1498.)

CHAPTER I.

SAVONAROLA'S SERMONS ON EZEKIEL DURING LENT, 1497. PIERO DE' MEDICI'S CAREER IN ROME. A FRESH ATTEMPT TO RE-ESTABLISH HIM IN FLORENCE; AND COMPLETE FAILURE OF THE SCHEME.

(1497.)

DURING Lent, 1497, Savonarola continued his course of sermons on Ezekiel, touching upon various important points connected with the struggle with Rome, now becoming daily more virulent. Consequently these discourses were very imperfectly reported by Violi, who only made short and arid summaries of them, and often omitted to record topics of real interest in favour of revelations and prophecies. We will therefore confine our attention to certain of the more noteworthy fragments.

One of the most remarkable points in these sermons is the question of the temporal possessions of the Church, upon which Savonarola had hitherto refrained from expressing his full views, probably in the hope that a better opportunity would be afforded him at the assembling of the Council. Nevertheless, in this Lenten course on Ezekiel, he plainly declared that the Church was entitled to temporal wealth, and that the possession of it had been sometimes necessary as well as useful, although now apparently degenerated into a mischievous burden. "The Church," he exclaimed, "hath been ruined by wealth. Wouldst thou say then, O Friar, that the Church should have no temporal wealth? Nay, it were heresy to say this, for we cannot believe that St. Sylvester would have accepted riches for the Church, or St. Gregory confirmed her in possession of them, had it been unlawful so to do; and for this reason we submit ourselves to the Church of Rome. Oh, but which is best, that she have riches or have them not? This is a serious question, for we all see that for the sake of wealth she hath been led to do evil, and of this I need give ye no proof. We will therefore reply, but in no absolute sense, even as the mariner who doth not *absolutely* wish to cast his riches into the sea, but only seeketh to escape danger, and will say that the Church would be better without riches, since she could thus be drawn nearer to God. Wherefore I say to my friars, Seek to adhere to poverty, for when riches enter among ye, death too comes in."[1] Pursuing the same theme, he inveighed against all laymen and priests who usurped ecclesiastical property and made a bad use of it. "Whoever hath usurped any ecclesiastical property, let him restore it to the Church of Christ, if there be any good pastors; if not, let him give it to the poor without regard to the canonical law. Thou, O canonist! mayst say what thou wilt, but my chief canon shall ever be that of charity. I bid ye take this for your rule, that no canon can be opposed to charity and conscience, for, if so, it is a false canon."[2]

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[1] "Prediche Sopra Ezechiele," &c., already quoted. It should be noted that this volume includes both the Lenten and Advent series; the Advent course ends with viii., the Lenten begins with ix.

[2] Sermons xiii. and xiv. He alludes more particularly to the holders of family benefices, who made an unworthy use of them, either by selling them or causing men to enter the Church without any true vocation.

To Savonarola, indeed, charity was the universal law, conscience the supreme guide. He desired to make no changes of dogma, but did not believe that a purely ecclesiastical reform could suffice to cure the universal corruption of the Christian world; it was necessary to revive men's faith and regenerate their hearts. "What is all this war stirred against me? What is its cause? Only because I have discovered the corruption of the wicked.[1] . . . But I will do, even as Frà Jacopone in Concistory, who on being bidden to preach in a certain way, looked round and repeated three times: I marvel that the earth doth not split and engulf ye on account of your sins."[2]

During this Lent, also, many sermons were filled with accusations against Rome, which were rendered the more impressive by the general presentiment of an approaching crisis in the prolonged struggle, and of the speedy revolt of all Christendom against the abominations of Rome. And Savonarola no longer hesitated to declare, that he would take the lead in any movement for the purification and reform of the Church. "The earth teems with bloodshed," he said, "yet the priests take no heed, rather by their evil example they bring spiritual death upon all. They have withdrawn from God, and their piety consists in spending their nights with harlots, and all their days in chattering in choirs; and the altar is made a place of traffic for the clergy. They say that God hath no care of the world, that all cometh by chance, neither believe they that Christ is present in the sacrament.[3] . . . Come here thou ribald Church. The Lord saith: I gave thee beautiful vestments, but thou hast made idols of them. Thou hast dedicated the sacred vessels to vainglory, the sacraments to simony; thou hast become a shameless harlot in thy lusts; thou art lower than a beast, thou art a monster of abomination. Once, thou felt shame for thy sins, but now thou art shameless. Once, anointed priests called their sons nephews; but now they speak no more of their nephews, but always and everywhere of their sons.[1] Everywhere hast thou made a public place and raised a house of ill-fame. And what doeth the harlot? She sitteth on the throne of Solomon, and soliciteth all the world: he that hath gold is made welcome and may do as he will; but he that seeketh to do good is driven forth. O Lord, my Lord, they will allow no good to be done! And thus, O prostitute Church, thou hast displayed thy foulness to the whole world, and stinkest unto Heaven. Thou hast multiplied thy fornications in Italy, in France, in Spain, and all other parts. Behold, I will put forth My hand, saith the Lord, I will smite thee, thou infamous wretch; my sword shall fall on thy children, on thy house of shame, on thy harlots, on thy palaces, and my justice shall be made known. Earth and heaven, the angels, the good and the wicked, all shall accuse thee, and no man shall be with thee; I will give thee into thy enemy's hand.[2] . . . O priests and friars, ye, whose evil example hath entombed this people in the sepulchre of ceremonial. I tell ye this sepulchre shall be burst asunder, for Christ will revive His Church in His spirit. Think ye that St. Francis, St. Dominic, and the other saints have forgotten their creed, and no longer intercede for it? We must all pray for its renovation. Write to France and to Germany; write everywhere to this effect: That Friar ye wot of bids ye all seek the Lord and implore His coming. Haste ye at full speed, O ye messengers! Think ye that we alone are good? That there be no servants of God in other places? Jesus Christ hath many servants, and great numbers of them, concealed in Germany, France and Spain, are now bewailing this evil. In all cities and strong places, in all manors and convents, there be some inspired with this fire of zeal. They send to whisper somewhat in my ear, and I reply: Remain concealed until ye hear the summons—*Lazare, veni foras!* I am here, because the Lord appointed me to this place, and I await His call, but then will I send forth a mighty cry that shall resound throughout Christendom, and make the corpse of the Church to tremble even as trembled the body of Lazarus at the voice of our Lord.

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[1] Sermon xix. [2] Sermon xvii.

[3] Sermon xxii., afterwards suppressed by the Congregation of the Index. One of the charges Savonarola frequently brought against the clergy was that they had no belief in Transubstantiation. This proves how far he was from sharing the Reformed doctrines of which some have declared him to be the initiator.

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[1] Here, he plainly alludes to Alexander VI. who wrote and spoke of his "children" without the least shame.

[2] Sermon xxii., afterwards suppressed.

"Many of ye say that excommunications will be decreed; but I repeat to ye that more than excommunication is intended. For my part, I beseech Thee, O Lord, that it may come quickly. What, hast thou no fear? Not I, for they seek to excommunicate me, because I do no evil. Bear this excommunication aloft on a lance and open the gates to it. I will reply unto it, and if I do not amaze thee, then thou mayst say what thou wilt. I shall make so many faces turn pale, that they will seem to thee a multitude; and I will send forth a shout that will cause the world to tremble and shake. I know well that there be one in Rome that striveth against me without cease. But that man is not moved by religious zeal, but only hateth me because he is ever crawling after great lords and potentates.[1] Others say: The Friar hath yielded, he hath sent one of his friends to Rome. I can tell thee that folks there hold not these views; and that if I wished to play the part of a flatterer, I should not now be in Florence, nor clad in a tattered robe, and would be able to escape my present danger.[1] But I seek none of these things, O Lord, I seek only Thy cross: let me be persecuted, I ask this grace of Thee. Let me not die in my bed, but let me give my blood for Thee, even as Thou gavest Thine for me.[2] . . . Meanwhile doubt not, my children, for the Lord will certainly lend us His aid."

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[1] This is an allusion to Frà Mariano da Genazzano, whose secret intrigues will soon come to light. But Savonarola was so reluctant to make personal attacks, that he afterwards asked the people's pardon for having, in this almost solitary instance, made too plain an allusion to a person, whom he had nevertheless left un-named.

Thus ended the course of Lenten sermons that had excited so much sensation as to attract many hearers from distant parts, and among others Ercole d'Este, son of the Duke of Ferrara, who came expressly to Florence in disguise.[3] Savonarola was now engaged in preparing both himself and the people for a decisive struggle, being resolved to defy excommunication, and placing his only hope in the Council, which he hoped to see speedily assembled. He was aware that his refusal to agree to the junction of the Tuscan and Roman Convents, a measure that even the Cardinal of Naples was now seeking to promote, had caused this prelate also to join the ranks of his enemies, and had irritated the Pope to the highest pitch. Hence, all hope of further truce was at an end. Alexander VI., nevertheless, instead of venting his rage, devised a final expedient of truly diabolical ingenuity. He caused the Florentines to be informed in strict confidence that in case of their joining the Holy League and separating from France, he was empowered to negotiate with them for the surrender of Pisa. The Ten instantly despatched

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[1] This would seem to allude to the offer of the cardinal's hat.

[2] Sermon xxviii., another of those afterwards suppressed.

[3] On the 5th of March, 1497, the orator Somenzi wrote to Ludovico from Florence to the following effect: "Yesterday evening, Messer Hercule, son of the Lord Sigismund of Este, arrived here, and has come *solum* and in disguise with six horses. . . . He informed me he had come to hear this Friar Hieronymo of Ferrara preach." This letter is not included in Prof. Del Lungo's published collection.

Ser Alessandro Bracci as special envoy to Rome, and he sent a report, in two letters dated the 14th and 15th of March, of his interview with the Pope. First of all, the Holy Father had emphatically deplored the craft of the French, saying: "May God pardon the author of that expedition, which has been the cause of all the woes of Italy, as your State, having been dismembered by the loss of Pisa, must be well aware. It would be worse still if the French came again. Wherefore we are using our best efforts, as our Lord God knows, to weld the whole of Italy into one body. To effect this we count chiefly on your sagacious wits. After great difficulty we have induced the League to bestow Pisa on you, but only on condition that you join with us, and act as good Italians, by leaving the French in France. And for this we must have stronger guarantees than mere words."

The Florentines however declined to fall into the trap. They knew that the Venetians were aiding Pisa, and that Ludovico was at odds both with them and the Pope. Bracci accordingly kept to generalities and only replied: that *ab antiquo* and always, the Florentines had been held to be not only good, but excellent Italians, and that their simple word was the best security that could possibly be found. Nor could their alliance with France, to whom they owed so many obligations, be held to imply that they wished to do injury to any of the Italian potentates. "But at this point he was interrupted by the Pope, who roughly exclaimed: 'Mr. Secretary, you are as fat as Ourself, but pardon me, you have come on a lean mission, and if you have nought else to say to me, you may go back at once to your post.' And after adding that the Florentines would be driven by force to that which they would not do of their own accord, and would repent when it was too late, he lost all self-control and cried:

'We well know that all this comes of your faith in the prophecies of that parable-monger of yours, and allowing him to lacerate us, insult us, threaten us, and trample upon us, who *licet immeriti*, now occupy the Holy Chair of St. Peter.'" The envoy tried to explain that His Holiness had been misinformed, that Savonarola was full of goodness and modesty, thus "endeavouring," as he wrote "to calm the rage with which I saw him so inflamed." But all was in vain, for "he continued to ride the high horse, declaring that the League would do this and say that."[1] Messer Riccardo Becchi, the orator in ordinary, repeated the same information, also adding "that the offer to surrender Pisa was futile and *quodammodo* hurtful, without the consent of the Venetians who were opposed to it. "The rage against Savonarola," he said, in conclusion, "is increasing on all sides in Rome, so that it is no more possible to say a word in his defence. And we must be on our guard against the intrigues of Piero de' Medici who will certainly try to profit by the present serious aspect of affairs, which is decidedly favourable to him."[2]

In fact, the Bigi faction in Florence was now showing an unusual activity that caused no little anxiety to the friends of the free government, who saw that, in the present state of things, any attempt on the part of the enemy might lead to the gravest danger. The scarcity, and consequently dearness, of food, was continually increasing, the demand for labour had diminished, and no day passed without the city being invaded by fresh bands of famine-stricken rustics, who went begging about the streets the very incarnations of misery. And in the midst of the famine many diseases had broken out, worst of all the plague, which now began to spread with alarming rapidity. The hospitals and all public buildings were full of sick and starving people, and the Piagnoni generously threw open their private abodes to all. Notwithstanding this aid, Jacopo Nardi calculates that several thousand persons perished of hunger in those days, and tells us that he himself saw many dying of exhaustion by the roadside and on doorsteps.[1] This was undoubtedly a most opportune moment for Medicean plots, and, in fact, while the Piagnoni were devoting all their energies to the relief of the poor, the Bigi were secretly conspiring for Piero's return. One of the most active of their accomplices was the Friar, Mariano da Genazzano, whose hatred for Savonarola was still red-hot; and who, after continually inflaming the Pope's rage against him, now suddenly reappeared in Florence. But before narrating these party intrigues, and the means employed by Piero de' Medici to execute his purpose, it is necessary to give an account of the latter's proceedings and ideas at this period. Fortunately we have a very minute report of all these things, compiled by Lamberto dell' Antella,[2] who had taken an active share in all Piero's plots, and was well acquainted with the manners and customs of his confederates.

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[1] Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," pp. 79–84.
[2] Ibid. pp. 84-86.

After the failure of his last year's attempt to enter Florence by force of arms, Piero had fled to Rome, a ruined, hopeless, and almost friendless man, and there led a most degraded and scandalous life. On rising for the day, shortly before dinner, his first thought was to send to the kitchen to see whether the chosen dishes suited his taste, and if not, he repaired to the San Severino Palace, where a sumptuous banquet was daily held, and where he accordingly passed the greater part of his time. The meal over, it was his habit, so Antella informs us, to remain closeted with some courtezan until supper-time, or even later, and then to go forth with loose and feather-headed companions into the streets of Rome, and after passing most of the night in debauch, to return to his wife about daybreak. Thus, he consumed his time and strength in gluttony, gambling, lewdness, and every description of unnatural vice; but of all his passions pride and love of oppression were the two strongest. He considered that all about him were bound to yield him implicit obedience, and allow him to tyrannize over them in any way he pleased. He never felt the least gratitude or mercy for those who served him; no amount of fidelity nor devotion availed to save them from brutal and arbitrary treatment. By way of rewarding a certain Francesco del Nero, who had traversed all Italy, by his command, bringing him large sums of money and serving him with the utmost zeal, Piero took a sudden dislike to the man, and positively begged Lamberto dell' Antella to contrive his assassination. Among the oldest and most devoted servants of his house there were always some to whom he showed the greatest affection whenever he was in need of their services; but directly they ceased to be of use he treated them worse than dogs, and even despatched some of them by poison. Nor were his retainers the only victims of his brutality; for he vented it upon all. To his brother the Cardinal[1] he often behaved with such excessive insolence, even in public, that more than once they came almost to an open rupture. Nevertheless, whenever the Cardinal received any money, Piero exacted a share, and in two or three days had squandered or lost it all at play.

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[1] Nardi, "Storia di Firenze," vol. i. p. 115.

[2] We shall have occasion to refer again to Lamberto and his narrative, which is given in the appendix to the Italian edition, doc. l.

By this mode of life the two brothers were reduced to such extremities as to be driven to pledge their plate, jewels, and tapestries. Being loaded with debts, they borrowed money at 20 per cent.; and, to use an expression of the period, every florin they spent cost them eight lire.[1] Meanwhile Piero continually cherished the hope of being some day reinstated in Florence, and revelled in the anticipation of the bloody revenge he would then wreak on his foes. He kept a memorandum of the families he intended to crush; their houses were to be razed to the ground and their property confiscated. In fact, when the Emperor's arrival at Pisa had again revived the hopes of the Medici, Cardinal Giovanni was one day heard to declare at Bolsena, while discussing the chances of their being recalled to power, that the number of those sentenced to exile and confiscation in '34,[2] and put to death in '78,[3] would be a mere joke compared with what they meant to do this time, inasmuch as they would take measures to prevent all risk of again being driven away. To this effect it was Piero's intention to devote nearly the whole revenue of the State to the hire of two large mercenary armies, under the command of Orsini and Alviano, and thus be able to ensure his revenge by force of arms. He also made continued applications to the Italian potentates, praying them to come to the aid of his house, it being his ardent wish to return to Florence by means of foreign assistance, in order to owe no obligation to any of his fellow-citizens, and be able to reign independently of their favour and advice, from which he shrank with the utmost abhorrence. One day, in fact, while conversing privately with some friends, of his longed-for return to Florence, and when, as frequently happens in these cases, all spoke as though everything must come about as they wished, Messer Ludovico da San Miniato turned to him and said, "You will be able to form a grand State, and, by means of a good and wise council of twenty-five or thirty citizens, to constitute a *Pratica* and govern your dominions as you choose." Whereupon Piero made a very unseemly gesture, and replied, "You ought to know by this time that I don't mean to ask any one's advice, and prefer rather to manage badly on my own account than well by others' help."[1] Such were the manners and designs of the man whom the Italian princes were seeking to re-establish in Florence, and to whom fortune now seemed disposed to give a helping hand.

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[1] Giovanni de' Medici, afterwards Pope Leo X.

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[1] The gold florin. The relative value of florins and lire was constantly changing, but just then a florin was worth between five and six lire.
[2] The year of Cosimo's reinstatement.
[3] After the conspiracy of the Pazzi.

In the course of the violent struggle now going on between the Arrabbiati and Piagnoni in Florence, the Bigi had gained fresh strength; and by remaining united and compact, and throwing their whole weight now on this side, now on that, often succeeded in getting their nominees elected by the council. Thus, when the new Signory for March and April was chosen, they procured the post of Gonfalonier for Bernardo del Nero, who, though undoubtedly possessed of much influence and sagacity, had always been a creature of the Medici, and desired either their restoration or the establishment of a restricted government in Florence.[2]

When his election was made known, the Bigi tried in vain to conceal their joy. An express messenger instantly set off at full speed for Rome to carry the news to Piero de' Medici. Thereupon the latter, awaking from his lethargy, hastened to write to friends, relations, and allies to beg men and money. The Pope and Venetians were very favourable to his cause; but the Duke of Milan was cold by reason of his old rancour against him.[1] He had many warm friends among the Florentine youth, who continually sent him cheering letters and messages, promising that as soon as he appeared the whole city should rise in his favour. Accordingly, being thus spurred and encouraged, he succeeded in collecting 1,300 men under the command of Bartolommeo d'Alviano, at that time a young Italian captain of great promise. But when the fallen tyrant was ready to take the field, and the new Signory favourable to him already nearing the end of their term, Bernardo del Nero sent to advise him to suspend operations, considering that the enterprise would have little chance of success at the moment. But Piero was not disposed to wait, after the sacrifices made and hopes excited, and on receiving more letters of encouragement from other friends, decided, at all risks, to make the attempt.

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[1] *Vide* in the Appendix (to the Italian edition) the report by Lamberto d'Antella, to which we have previously referred, and from which we have drawn this description of Piero's life and manners.

[2] So Guicciardini asserts in the "Storia Fiorentina," chap. xv. p. 153, but in his "Storia Italia," vol. ii. p. 105, he merely says that Del Nero was a Medicean; so, too, Nardi, vol. i. p. 118, and other writers. On the day of his election (February 26th), the orator Somenzi wrote to Ludovico as follows: "No Gonfalonier could be better suited to our friend's views; hence it is thought that all will go as we wish." *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. ii.

About the 20th of April he began his march to Siena, and found Pandolfo Petrucci, who was almost supreme in that State, well disposed to assist him. Accordingly, after resting and re-organizing his men, he took the road towards Florence on the 27th of the month. His movements were so rapid that two hours before daybreak on the 28th he was already at the monastery of San Gaggio,[2] and expected that at sunrise the people would throw open the San Pier Gattolini Gate[3] and welcome him back to the city. During the night a violent storm of rain had compelled him to halt near Tavarnelle, at about sixteen miles from Florence, and while his horses and men were resting, he had had the sagacity to arrest or drive back all persons on their way to the city. But among these was a peasant, who, on finding himself suddenly ordered back by mounted troops at that point, divined that Piero de' Medici was concerned in the matter; and hurriedly making his way across country, reached the gate just as it was being opened, and gave warning to the guards. He was immediately taken to the Signory, and before he reached the Palace the whole town was ringing with the news. The excited populace flew to arms, and the Signory were immediately compelled to close the gates and mount the few pieces of cannon which were ready for use. Bernardo del Nero did his best to conceal his real sentiments by showing great zeal in preparing for the defence; but as many suspicions were already afloat about him, the citizens refused to hoist their banners to summon the mob, and only supplied weapons to well-known and trusted friends of freedom, who instantly proceeded to man the gates.[1]

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[1] "For the which cause Piero took courage and asked help from the League, but the Duke unexpectedly failed him" (Guicciardini, "Storia Fiorentina," chap. xvi.).

[2] Less than a mile from Florence.

[3] Now known as the Roman Gate.

Just when the general alarm and disorder were at their height, Messer Filippo Arrigucci, one of the Signory, and a great friend of Savonarola, sent Girolamo Benivieni to ask the latter what he thought would become of the city. Benivieni relates that directly the Friar saw him enter the cell, he exclaimed, without giving him time to speak: "*Modicæ fidei, quare dubitasti?*" "Go, tell the Signory that Piero de' Medici will ride up to the gates and ride off again without obtaining any success."[2]

In fact, day had scarcely dawned before Piero rode up to the gate; but, to his great amazement, it was still closed. And when he saw that the few culverins mounted on it were about to open fire on him, he took refuge behind a wall, vainly expecting that the people would presently rise in his favour. He remained waiting the whole day; and although at the head of 1,300 well-equipped soldiers,[1] had not the courage to make any use of them, preferring to expose himself to the scoffs of the inhabitants of the suburb, who were watching him and mocking at his fears. Being finally persuaded that no one in the city would stir a finger in his cause, and alarmed by the idea that the Florentine troops before Pisa might cut off his retreat, he decided to withdraw, or rather to fly, inasmuch as, before dawn the following day, he was already across the Sienese border.

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[1] For all these particulars, *vide* Nardi, Guicciardini, Cerretani, Parenti, and Pitti, whose accounts are almost identical.

[2] *Vide* Benivieni's previously quoted letter to Clement VII.

After this event he could no longer entertain any hope of returning to Florence. His fortunes were now irretrievably ruined; his attempt of the previous year had shown him how little reliance could be placed in the pledges and promises of the allies; and now, even with one of his own friends at the head of the government, he saw the falseness of the hopes held out to him by his adherents. Nevertheless Florence was far from tranquil, and much turmoil and disorder prevailed. The suspicion felt by many that even the members of the Signory had intrigued in favour of the Medici, fostered a state of general excitement and distrust, exasperated party hatred, and aroused new dissensions. Accordingly it was most sagaciously resolved to keep the affair quiet until sufficient proofs of guilt could be established to justify some sanguinary act of retribution. A new Signory was chosen on the very day of the attempt; the Council of Eight was charged to watch Piero's movements; while Francesco Valori, who was one of the Eight, and Tommaso Tosinghi, of the Ten, were commissioned to discover what threads of the conspiracy had been woven within the city. So for a time the affair was hushed up, but with imminent danger of some violent political crisis.

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[1] Nardi says they comprised 500 light horse and as many or more foot, "fine and well-disciplined troops." Guicciardini ("Storia d'Italia") numbers them at 600 horse and 400 foot; Parenti, at 120 men-at-arms, 300 horse, and 1,500 foot; Ammirato and Sismondi, at 800 horse and 3,000 foot. I have preferred to follow the particulars given by Antella, who was in the best position for knowing the truth.

CHAPTER II.

SAVONAROLA'S SERMON ON ASCENSION DAY, AND THE POPULAR RIOT. THE EXCOMMUNICATION LAUNCHED AGAINST HIM, AND HIS REPLY. THE RAGING OF THE PESTILENCE, AND ITS DECLINE.

(1497.)

ON the failure of Piero de' Medici's attempt, the fortunes of the Bigi instantly began to decline, and their most bitter enemies, the Arrabbiati, gained ascendency. The new Signory was composed almost entirely of Arrabbiati, and one of their chiefs, Piero degli Alberti, was created Gonfalonier of Justice. No sooner was this party master of the field than it strained every nerve to obtain reinforcements and thin the ranks of its adversaries. But as the Bigi, being terribly weakened, tried to keep in the background, all hostilities were directed against Savonarola and the popular party. The Arrabbiati were therefore regarded with high favour by the Duke of Milan, and with still higher by the Pope, who now denied all complicity with Piero de' Medici,[1] and promised them his best aid and support in destroying the Friar. Upon this they set vigorously to work, and foremost of all were the Compagnacci, whose leader, the depraved Doffo Spini, was a youth of noted audacity. The band met together at nightly banquets, and amid the cheerful clinking of wine cups, laid fresh plots against Savonarola. But as he had now withdrawn to his cloister, and abstained from appearing in the pulpit, all they could do was to affix insulting placards on the convent walls, disturb the services and prayers in St. Mark's by riotous behaviour, insult his congregation, and await the first opportunity for more serious attacks.[1]

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[1] Borgia declared that the affair had taken place "without his consent or knowledge." *Vide* "Lettera a Lorenzo di Filippo Strozzi," written by a certain *Antonio servo tuo*, and dated 20th May, 1497. In the Magliabecchi Library, Codex ii., ii. 437, at sheet 111.

Their chance soon came. On the 3rd of May, 1497, the approach of summer heats and the continuance of the plague gave the Signory a pretext for prohibiting all sermons in the churches after the 5th of the month.[2] But on Ascension Day, the 4th, it was still lawful to preach, and Savonarola resolved to show himself in the pulpit. Both friends and foes were equally excited by the announcement. The Arrabbiati declared that the Friar would not be heard; the Piagnoni that he would. Not only were many wagers laid on the subject, but the one side prepared for defence, the other for attack. Upon this the Signory issued a decree, annulling the wagers and forbidding any attempt to prevent the Ascension sermon from being given.[3] But their commands had no effect. The Compagnacci were bent on either killing Savonarola outright that day or at least doing him some grievous bodily hurt. First of all, ten of the band arranged with a firework-maker, named Baia, to blow up the pulpit during the sermon. This idea, however, was soon put aside, on account of the terrible havoc it would make among the assembled congregation, and the infinite hatred it would arouse against the authors of the deed. So they decided on another plan. After defiling the pulpit with unmentionable filth, they draped it with the skin of an ass three days dead, and then nailed iron spikes into the ledge on which the Friar was accustomed to strike his fist in the heat of his eloquence. All this was a base and futile mode of attack; but Spini and his band hoped that it might lead to a riot, and thus give them an opportunity of effecting their real purpose.[1]

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[1] At sheet 53^t of the before-mentioned Codex, Violi gives a minute account of Doffo Spini.

[2] *Vide* the Decree in the Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. iii.

[3] *Vide* Ibid.

Meanwhile a thousand rumours, true and false, were afloat in the city as to the Compagnacci's designs. Some said that the pulpit had been poisoned by an invisible powder; others declared that the Friar would be murdered in the church, in the midst of his sermon; some repeated one story, some another. A few of Savonarola's friends came to his cell to implore him not to risk his life by preaching on Ascension Day. But he replied with noble indignation: "No fear of man shall induce me to deprive the people of their sermon on the day appointed by the Lord to His disciples for going to spread His doctrine through the world." Accordingly the only thing to be done was to sharpen their weapons for his defence.

At early dawn the first Piagnoni who entered the church cleansed the pulpit of every scrap of filth, planed its surface, and restored everything to order. Savonarola issued from the convent a little before mid-day, and entered the church with an escort of some of his best-trusted friends. Behind the multitude of people squeezed into the nave, the Compagnacci were descried standing apart and quite undismayed. They were all richly dressed and perfumed, and their airs of defiance and insolent smiles formed a marked contrast with the sober simplicity and reverential demeanour of the Piagnoni.[1] At the fitting moment the Friar ascended the pulpit, and began his sermon with a discourse on the power of faith: "Faith is all-powerful," he said, "can overcome every obstacle, and lead us to contemn earthly things by assuring us of the heavenly life. The times predicted are now at hand; the hour of danger hath come; and now it shall be manifest who is truly with the Lord. The wicked thought to prevent this sermon to-day; but they should know that I have never shirked my duty through fear of man. No mortal upon earth, be he great or small, can boast of having hindered me from fulfilling my office. I am even ready to lay down my life for it. O Lord! deliver me from these foes who brand me as a seducer; deliver my soul, since for my body I fear not. I call the Lord, the Virgin, the angels, and the saints to witness that all things predicted by me are revelations from God, revelations granted me by Divine inspiration during the vigils endured for the sake of this people that now plotteth against me."

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[1] This is related by the old chroniclers and biographers. *Vide* Nardi; Parenti; "Vita Latina," at sheet 31^t; Burlamacchi, p. 95; Violi, &c.

After a long and general introductory on faith, Savonarola made a special address to the faithful: "Ye lose heart too easily, and are sad when ye should rejoice; now your tribulations are at hand; ye will be warred against by excommunications, by the sword, and by martyrdom: the days of trial are come. God grant that I be the first to endure them; I have already announced that I shall have to support great ingratitude, and that the lukewarm will do unto me even as Joseph's brethren did unto him, when they sold him to the merchants of Egypt. They (the lukewarm) cry that I am no prophet; yet they do all things to fulfil my prophecies. I tell ye again that

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[1] These particulars are minutely described by Violi, Burlamacchi, and other biographers.

Italy will be devastated by barbarian hordes; and when these shall make peace among themselves, destruction after destruction will befall this perverted land. But ye that are righteous offer your prayers, and the Lord shall give ye succour."

"Now as to the wicked." At this point loud murmurs were heard in the church. "Lord, be Thou not angered with them; forgive them, convert them, for they know not what they do. Ye wicked ones, ye think to combat the Friar, and ye thereby make war on the Lord; for I fight ye not from hatred to yourselves, but for the love of God. Ye say that I sow discord; but the Lord Christ Himself came to bring strife among men. Why return ye not to virtue, for then peace shall be with ye?—O Friar, thou shouldst not have preached when forbidden by the Signory.—That is not true; nor may I refrain from preaching from fear or by the command of man. I shall keep silent only when my preaching may do hurt, or I may fear that scandal come of it."

At this moment, as though it were intended to take him at his word, a tremendous crash resounded through the church; the doors were burst open, the crowd took to flight; and the noise, confusion, and disorder seemed enough to shake down the building. The tumult had been raised by the Compagnacci. Francesco Cei, one of their number, had seized the alms box and hurled it on the pavement, thus giving the signal for the disturbance. Some yelled and beat on the benches, while others banged open the doors. The conspirators were afraid to ring the bells, as had been arranged; but the panic-stricken crowd sought to escape, and while some of the more faithful pressed round the pulpit to protect Savonarola, others had already hastened to the Via del Cocomero[1] to fetch the weapons stored in the houses of Piero Francesco Tosinghi and Cambi the Rich.[1] These friends, about sixty in number, quickly reappeared in the church armed with lances and swords. At first sight of the flashing steel the alarm of the multitude was increased, by mistaking the armed men for Arrabbiati, and the confusion became so tremendous that no one could move either backwards or forwards. Thereupon Bartolommeo Giugni and Giuliano Mazzinghi, who, as members of the Eight, thought their official dignity would preserve them from attack, advanced towards the pulpit with the intention of despatching Savonarola. But they found him well guarded, and Giugni received a severe blow in the face from Corbizzo da Castrocaro — an unprecedented experience for one of the Eight.

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[1] Now Via Ricasoli.

Savonarola vainly strove to make himself heard in all this demoniacal uproar and confusion by crying out: "Ah! the wicked refuse to hear their fate. . . . Wait! have patience!" Then raising the crucifix on high, he exclaimed: "Trust in this and fear nothing." But finding that no one heeded his words, he knelt in prayer, and, as soon as the tumult was somewhat abated, left the pulpit surrounded by his friends, who welcomed him with loud shouts of joy; some brandishing their swords and spears, others the crosses they held in their hands, and with cries of "*Viva Cristo!*" all then escorted him to St. Mark's. There, in the convent garden, in the midst of his brethren, Savonarola pronounced the following words by way of concluding his interrupted discourse: "The longer the Lord stayeth His hand, the more heavily and severely will He smite each one according to his works. The wicked refuse to believe, refuse to hearken; but they will fall into the pit they have dug for others; they are undermining the foundations of a wall that will crush them as it breaks. Now I will sing praises unto the Lord and joyfully depart from this life"[1] His "Ascension Sermon," as it was called, was speedily diffused throughout Italy. Girolamo Cinozzi had the courage to make a report of it in the midst of the riot, and this he published together with a faithful account of the scene that had passed under his eyes, and the concluding words delivered by Savonarola at St. Mark's.[2] In Florence, Rome, and all over Italy the attempt in the Duomo was the sole talk of the day, and every one feared the worst consequences from the event.

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[1] Surnamed the Rich to distinguish him from many others of the name of Cambi in Florence.

Meanwhile Savonarola brought out a new epistle, dated 8th of May, addressed: "To all God's chosen and faithful Christians."[3] In this he said: "We have resolved to imitate the Lord, who on many occasions bent before the rage of the Scribes and Pharisees; and will therefore abstain from preaching. But in order that the Lord's work may not be overthrown, nor the wicked made to rejoice, we will express in writing that which we may not say by word of mouth. Be not troubled, but rather rejoice in persecutions. All our prophecies are being fulfilled: first of all they (the wicked) have slandered us, then by crooked paths they have sought our excommunication, and having failed to achieve this as yet, now strike at our life. Hitherto no drop of blood hath been spilt, for the Lord, knowing our frailty, hath not permitted us to be tempted beyond our strength; but increasing our weight of tribulation step by step, will likewise raise our faith, virtue, and courage to a higher pitch. Thus He prepareth us for heavier persecutions, so that men being amazed by our constancy may begin to know that we are sustained by the certainty of a better life than this, and may begin to hope in it themselves. Our tribulations, despite the will of those that provoke them, will serve to diffuse this light. We give thanks to the Lord for having, in these utterly faithless times, chosen us to suffer for the faith. And as ye are deprived of the word of God by the sin of those who raised a scandal on the day appointed by the Lord to His disciples for going forth and preaching in the world, pray ye the Almighty that He once more deign to unseal the lips of His preachers, inasmuch as that which He ordaineth no strength may prevail against."

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[1] The narrative of this event is not only derived from the biographers ("Vita Latina," sheet 31 and fol.; Burlamacchi, p. 93 and fol.), and other historians from whom we have quoted, but also from G. Cinozzi's pamphlets, mentioned below, and private manscuript letters in the Magliabecchi Library. One of these is addressed by Alessandro Giugni to Lorenzo, son of Filippo Strozzi, and dated 4th of May, 1497 (Codex ii., ii. 437, at sheet 113); another, addressed to the same person on the same day, is from the pen of Jo. de Borromeis (same Codex at sheet 106). *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. iv.

[2] This pamphlet, of which there are many contemporary editions, undated, supplies us with an authentic and detailed account of the event from the pen of an eyewitness. It is entitled: "Predica del venerando P. F. Hieronymo da Ferrara, facta la mattina dell' Ascensione, 1497." There is a "Prohemio" affixed to it, beginning thus: "Hieronymus Cinoctius Barnabe Rodiano suo salute." This Cinozzi must not be confounded with the other of the same name, author of the "Epistola," or Short Life of Savonarola, preserved in manuscript in the Riccardi Library, and to which we have had to make frequent reference.

[3] "A tutti gli eletti di Dio e fedeli Cristiani." It was repeatedly reprinted in 1498, and is also given in Quétif's work, vol. ii. p. 170.

During this time the power of the Arrabbiati was daily increasing in Florence, and the Frateschi were more and more oppressed. The authors of the riot remained unpunished, while many men of the people were put to the question by the Eight, the which council had positively provoked the disorders it was its mission to prevent. The Signory sent an edict to all the churches, forbidding monks or friars of any Order to preach.[1] And on the 20th of May, a long and noisy *Pratica* was held, in which, while proposing measures for the re-establishment of the public peace, an effort was also made to obtain an edict for Savonarola's banishment. But this attempt had no chance of success, since all soon perceived that it would rouse too much hatred and scandal among the Florentine people.[1] The Arrabbiati, however, were by no means discouraged by this check, having other and far greater hopes in view. The Papal excommunication, that had only been delayed pending the result of Piero de' Medici's attempt, was now daily expected. The Pope also had probably counted on great results from the Ascension Day plot, the preparations for which must have been brought to his knowledge by Frà Mariano. This man had fled to Rome directly after the failure of the Medicean expedition, and never relaxed his efforts to urge the Pope to destroy Savonarola, whom he styled "an instrument of the devil, and the perdition of the Florentine people." After the Ascension Day riot the Pope, although increasingly enraged at the Friar's daring, was rejoiced to see that at this moment the latter's friends were as weak as his enemies were strong. In fact the Arrabbiati now wrote pressingly to the effect that the times were ripe for Savonarola's excommunication, and that further delay would be useless. "Thus, finding the matter prepared," so wrote the orator Becchi to the Ten, "the medicine took instant effect;"[2] that is to say, the bull of excommunication was despatched.

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[1] Burlamacchi, p. 96; Nardi, Parenti, Barsanti, Cinozzi, Violi. *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. iii., the "Deliberations of the Signory."

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[1] Some information relating to this affair is also to be found in the "Lettera a Messer Lorenzo de Filippo Strozzi," of the 20th of May, 1497, from which we have already quoted: "Throughout the territory, as thou knowest, there has been great noise concerning the Friar; and it seemed as if things were coming to a point that would have relieved some of our souls. And to avoid ill results, a great *Pratica* was held on the affair this morning; and the Signory and others, as I hear, are labouring to establish real peace among the citizens, and sweep away these parties for and against the Friar, which are a hurt and dishonour to the public in general and every citizen in particular. And for the sake of peace it is proposed to exile the Friar."

[2] Letter to the Ten, dated 18th of May, 1497, given in Gherardi's "Nuovi Documenti," at pp. 91-92.

Foreseeing the storm that was about to break over his head, Savonarola tried to avert it by addressing a letter to the Pope, dated the 22nd of May. Assuming a conciliatory but also dignified tone, he began with these words: "Wherefore is my Lord angered with his servant?" And continuing in the same strain, he complained that the Pope had always refused to listen to him, while giving a ready ear to the false charges alleged against him by his enemies, although these were triumphantly refuted by the evidence of his public and printed sermons. He likewise complained bitterly of the shameless audacity of Frà Mariano, who, after having personally attacked the Pope in his sermons, using language unfit for the pulpit, and being consequently reproved by Savonarola himself before the whole congregation,[1] now perfidiously brought the same charge against him who had never made personal attacks on any one, far less on the ruler of the faithful, the vicar of Christ. He again declared his submission to the authority of the Church, asserting that he preached no doctrine save that of the Holy Fathers, as would speedily be made apparent to the whole world by means of his "Triumph of the Cross." He then concluded the letter as follows: "For if all human aid fail me, I will put my trust in God, and make manifest to all the world the iniquity of those who may perhaps be driven to repent the work they have in hand."

But at the date of this letter,[2] the excommunicatory brief of the 13th of May was already despatched. Only by a strange, and, as regarded Savonarola, fortunate chance, circumstances contributed to lessen its efficacy. It had been indited in the very unusual form of a circular letter to the Friars of the Santissima Annunziata and other convents,[1] almost as though the Pope were afraid to couch it in the more solemn form of an address to believers in general. It was entrusted to the care of Gian Vittorio da Camerino, but on reaching Siena this theologian feared to proceed, lest he should be seized and torn to pieces by the followers of the Friar.[2] Accordingly, he retraced his steps, and the brief being consigned to other hands, only reached Florence towards the end of May. Even then, many of the clergy hesitated to publish it, on account of its unusual form, and in the absence of the Apostolic Commission customarily charged with that duty.[3]

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[1] Savonarola frequently alludes to the violence of Frà Mariano's sermons, which was indeed a matter of general notoriety.

[2] It was dated May 22, 1497, and was wrongly believed by all to be a reply to the brief of excommunication. But the brief, written on the 3rd of the month, and, as we shall see, delayed by the way, had not yet reached Florence. The exact date of its arrival is not mentioned by all the historians; but all agree that it came towards the end of the month; and before that time no manuscript letters examined by us contain any allusion to the excommunication. Parenti (vol. ii. of the original MS.

The terms of this brief, or circular letter, were no less strange than its form.

"We have heard from many persons worthy of belief," so wrote the Pope, "that *a certain* Frà Girolamo Savonarola, at this present, *said to be* vicar of St. Mark's in Florence, hath disseminated pernicious doctrines to the scandal and great grief of simple souls. We had already

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at sheet 11ᵗ) and Landucci (p. 153) fix the date of publication on the 18th of June. If the letter of Savonarola, recapitulated above, had been written in reply to the excommunication, it would have had no sense. Even Herr Meier seems to have perceived this, but could not discover how to rectify the error, since, like many others, he considered that the brief of the 13th must have certainly reached Florence by the 16th or 17th of May. Savonarola's letter is given by Quétif, vol. ii. p. 125.

[1] *I.e.*, Santa Maria Novella, Santa Croce, and Santo Spirito. Landucci, "Diario," p. 153. See, too, Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. vi.

[2] He had already suffered imprisonment as one of the most turbulent of Savonarola's foes, and been declared a rebel, as may also be seen by a letter of the Ten, published in Gherardi's "Nuovi Documenti," and by one from Gian Vittorio himself at p. 96 of the same.

[3] Burlamacchi, Pico, Barsanti, Marchese, Nardi, Parenti, &c.

commanded him, by his vows of holy obedience, to suspend his sermons, and come to us to seek pardon for his errors; but he refused to obey, and alleged various excuses, which we too graciously accepted,[1] hoping to convert him by our clemency. But, on the contrary, he persisted still more in his obstinacy; wherefore, by a second brief (7th of November, 1496)[2] we commanded him, under pain of excommunication, to unite the Convent of St. Mark to the Tusco-Roman Congregation recently created by us. But even then he still persisted in his stubbornness, thus, *ipso facto*, incurring censure. Therefore we now command ye, on all festivals, and in the presence of the people, to declare the said Frà Girolamo excommunicate, and to be held as such by all men, *for his failure to obey our apostolic admonitions and commands.* And, under pain of the same penalty, all are forbidden to assist him, hold intercourse with him, or approve him either by word or deed, inasmuch as he is an excommunicated person, and *suspected* of heresy.—Given in Rome this 13th day of May, 1497."[3]

Thus, notwithstanding the many accusations brought against the doctrines of the Friar, the Pope only designates him as *suspected* of heresy, and even this only on hearsay, and therefore implicitly avows that he had never examined into the charges himself. The sentence of excommunication, accordingly, was only inflicted on account of the Friar's disobedience in declining to unite St. Mark's to the new Tusco-Roman Congregation. As we have already said, and as is proved by the terms of the brief, this junction was imposed as a punishment, or rather as a pretext for compelling Savonarola to silence. The latter had opposed it, with the best of reasons, showing the Pope that it was not only his right, but his duty to reject a measure that would have such grievous results for his convent; and likewise that the matter did not depend on the Pope alone, but required the consent of all the brethren of St. Mark's. However this may have been, the terms of the excommunication proved to the world that the Church could not tax Savonarola's doctrines with heresy; while as regarded his refusal to go to Rome, the Pope having accepted his excuses at the time, had no right now to accuse him of disobedience, save on certain points of little importance, regarding which Alexander himself had frequently sent contradictory orders, and used merely as pretexts.

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[1] This proves the truth of Savonarola's assertion; *i.e.*, that the Pope had accepted his excuses for refusing to go to Rome.

[2] "Quod cum eo, in sua duritie persistente, secus eveniret, aliis nostris literis in forma Brevis, sub data septimi novembris, &c." This shows that the proposed Tusco-Roman union had been imposed as a punishment.

[3] *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. v. Padre Marchese was rather doubtful whether this was the real brief of excommunication, because of its irregular form; but from Savonarola's letters and sermons there does not seem to have been any other, and we shall return to the question elsewhere. Professor Del Lungo has since discovered the original of the copy sent from Rome to the Friars of the Badia, and has published it in the "Archivio Storico Italiano," new series, vol. xviii. part i. p. 17. It is dated 13th of May, whereas certain old copies of it are dated on the 12th. As separate copies were sent from Rome to the different convents, possibly all were not written on the same day.

This event, as may well be imagined, threw all Florence in confusion. The Arrabbiati were triumphant, and wrote continual letters to Rome in order to neutralize the effect of every argument Bracci and Becchi were then urging in the Friar's defence. These orators wrote, in fact, that the Pope was much pacified by Savonarola's epistle, and seemed to repent of having despatched the excommunication.[1] But they added that the hostile cardinals, Frà Mariano and the Arrabbiati were spitting fire and flame, and that the matter had been accordingly handed over to the six cardinals charged to reform the Church. The real point, they wrote in conclusion, is that the Pope is most anxious for the Florentines to break their treaty with France and join in the League. This is why he always promises the surrender of Pisa, and this explains his hatred for Savonarola, who keeps you firm to the French alliance.[1]

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[1] On the 17th of June Bracci wrote to the Ten, that he had found the Pope well disposed to revoke the brief, but for the arrival from Florence of private letters and intelligence to the contrary effect. The Pope told the Cardinal of Perugia that "this publication" (of the brief), "*hoc tempore facta*, was displeasing to him, and was *omnino preter* mentem suam." Afterwards his mood entirely changed. (Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti." p. 98.)

Nevertheless the excommunication was launched, and and on the 18th of June finally proclaimed with great solemnity in the churches of Santa Croce, Santa Maria Novella, Santo Spirito, the Annunziata, and the Badia, to all of which it was addressed. It was impressively read by torchlight, in the presence of a considerable number of friars and amid the tolling of small bells. And at the concluding word the lights were extinguished, and each church plunged in silence and gloom.[2]

It would be difficult to give an adequate idea of the outcry, disorder, and lamentation prevailing in the city. A few days afterwards, on the 24th of June, the festival of St. John, the patron of Florence, the friars of St. Augustine and St. Francis refused to take part in it if the monks of St. Mark's were allowed to do so. Accordingly the latter, and also the brethren of St. Dominic at Fiesole, were ordered to remain in their cloisters that day. The insolence of the Compagnacci, being encouraged by the Eight and the

[1] Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," p. 95 and fol. This is clearly proved by letters of Bracci, Becchi, and the Ten, given in this work.

[2] The "Vita Latina," at sheet 30^t, and Burlamacchi, at p. 92, give a different account of the ceremony. According to them the friars of all these different churches were collected in the Duomo, and it was there that the excommunication was solemnly proclaimed. But Luca Landucci ("Diario," p. 153), who was present in the church of Santo Spirito, and Parenti (vol. ii. original MS., sheet 11^t) recount the affair as it really occurred. Also, seeing that Savonarola soon resumed his sermons in the Duomo, it would be difficult to believe that the sentence of excommunication could have been proclaimed in that church.

majority of the Signory, now passed all limits, so that great licence, both of speech and action, prevailed. Savonarola was slandered on all sides, and swarms of sonnets, anonymous ballads, indecent tracts, and monkish diatribes were published against his doctrines. At night, when the brethren were attending service in the choir, the mob gathered round the convent shouting and singing, and committing much damage by showers of stones. And, being allowed full impunity, the audacity of the rabble increased. Immoral practices returned as if by magic; the churches were deserted, the taverns filled; women resumed the immodest mode of dress and the jewels they had discarded, and again paraded the streets attired with dazzling luxury. Scented gallants again sang indecent songs under the windows of their mistresses without exciting the latters' blushes. In less than a month Florence seemed to have gone back to the days of Lorenzo the Magnificent; all thoughts of patriotism and freedom were forgotten. Such were the first results of the brief of excommunication![1]

Nevertheless Savonarola preserved his composure, and, without precipitating matters, began to take measures of defence. On the 19th of June, 1497, he wrote an "Epistle against surreptitious excommunication, addressed to all Christians beloved of God." This, after recapitulating all that he had so often before said concerning his doctrines, concluded as follows: "The lukewarm need have no fear,[2] for this excommunication is invalid both in the sight of God and man, inasmuch as it is based on the false reasons and accusations devised by our enemies. I have always submitted and even still submit to the authority of the Church, nor will ever fail in my obedience; but no one is bound to yield to commands opposed to charity and the law of God, since in such case our superiors are no longer the representatives of the Lord. Meanwhile, seek by prayer to make ready for that which may befall ye; for, should the matter proceed, we will make the truth known to all the world." Then, in a second letter, undated, *Contra sententiam excommunicatonis contra se nuper iniuste latam*, he set himself to prove, by long quotations from Gerson, that no one should be cowed by unjust condemnations, and that to meekly submit to every sentence pronounced "*est asinina patientia, timor leporinus et fatuus.*" Still citing Gerson's words, he went on to speak, although only in general terms, of making appeal to the council, declaring that it was not merely allowable, but obligatory to resist the Pope in cases where the Pontiff tried to enforce his authority to the detriment of the Church. "Nor does the Christian commit sin," the quotation concluded, "in accepting the aid of the secular power, in order to escape from unjust excommunication; for unjust sentences of this description are mere violence, and the law of nature prescribes that we should repulse force by force. And we are specially justified in so doing in cases where care has been taken to avoid scandal, and to enlighten the faint-hearted, who believe the Sovereign Pontiff to be almost as God, having power over both heaven and earth. It is needful to show humility and meekness to him, but, when humility fails, then *accipienda est animosa libertas.*" And to these words from Gerson, Savonarola added: "All this speaks admirably in our favour; nevertheless so great is the ignorance of mankind at this day, that many would hold not only ourselves to be excommunicate, but all who frequent the convent; while others, being still more ignorant, would add that it were even necessary to shun all intercourse with those who attend our church. They do not know what was said by

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[1] All this is minutely described in the "Vita Latina," Burlamacchi, Nardi, Violi, &c.

[2] This epistle is also given by Quétif, vol. ii. p. 185. The fifteenth century edition is undated.

Martin V. at the Council of Constance, the which was afterwards confirmed by that of Basle—*i.e.*, that we are no wise bound to shun the excommunicated, unless expressly and personally commanded so to do." [1]

Savonarola's enemies lost no time in communicating these letters to the Pope, who could scarcely be expected to feel gratified by their contents. But happily for the Friar, amid the continual changes of government in Florence, the new Signory for July and August was composed of his friends; hence, instead of leaving his defence to the Ten, he was able to write in his own name to Bracci and Becchi, hotly urging them to press the revocation of the interdict.[2] And to give greater weight to his demand, he had previously called a meeting of all the leading citizens on the 5th of July, in order to hear their advice. They all spoke in Savonarola's favour, enumerated the benefits he had conferred on the city, and counselled him to make an energetic appeal for the withdrawal of the excommunicatory brief. Many pointed out that this was not a religious, but a political question, and that it was entirely owed to the efforts of the foes to popular government in Florence. Francesco Gualterotti, speaking in the name of the Ten of War, expressed himself even more clearly than the rest. "My honourable fathers and colleagues are anxious that peace and order should be maintained in the city since the safety of the Friar will thus be assured. It is their opinion that had the censure of the Church emanated directly and solely from the Pope, it would have behooved us to let it follow its due course. But seeing that it really emanated from this city, they hold that some way must be found to quiet and extinguish it here, so that the Pope (whom I now venture to name) may not hear of our follies, nor our city be injured by his censure. And they likewise believe that, at our request, the revocation of the brief may easily be obtained."[1]

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[1] This Latin epistle is given in Quétif, vol. ii. p. 191. The fifteenth century edition is undated.

[2] These letters are included among the "Documenti," published by Padre Marchese.

After this meeting the Signory not only wrote to the orators afresh, but on the 8th of July despatched a letter to the Pope himself in the following terms: "Most Holy Father, we are deeply afflicted to have incurred the ban of the Church, not only because of the respect always entertained by our Republic for the Holy Keys, but because we see that a most innocent man has been wrongfully and maliciously accused to your Holiness. We deem this Friar to be a good and pious man, and thoroughly versed in the Christian faith. He has laboured many years for the welfare of our people, and no fault has ever been detected either in his life or his doctrine. But, as virtue is never free from the attacks of envy, so there be many of our people who invert the name of honesty and think to rise to greatness by attacking the good. Wherefore we fervently implore your Holiness, in your paternal and divine charity, to use your own judgment in this matter, and remove the weight of your ban not only from Father Girolamo Savonarola, but from all those who may have incurred it. Your Holiness could do no greater kindness to the Republic, especially in this time of pestilence, in which bans are of grave peril to men's souls."[2]

Throughout the remainder of the year the Republic carried on an energetic correspondence in Savonarola's defence, since, fortunately for him, the various Signories elected were all favourable to his cause, and the Council of Ten was always devoted to him.[1] The orator Becchi, a weak and credulous man, proved of little use;[2] but Ser Alessandro Bracci achieved good results by his energy and goodwill. He won over the Cardinals of Perugia, Benevento, and Capaccio, solicited and conciliated the Cardinal of Naples, who was no longer well inclined to St. Mark's ; and availed himself of the aid of Giorgio Benigno and Giovanni Nasi, who were then resident in Rome, and had always laboured in the Friar's defence. And, while all these efforts were being used, with some hope of success, not only to soothe the Pope's wrath, but to win his favour, a very singular offer was made to Savonarola. It is declared that the Cardinal of Siena [3] sent him word that if the sum of 5,000 crowns were paid to a certain creditor of his, he would undertake to obtain the removal of the ban. This impudent offer was not without precedent, since anything could then be had for money in

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[1] Florence Archives, "Consulte e Pratiche," Registro, 65, at sheet 43. I have reason to believe that no other modern writer has hitherto made use of these "Pratiche," which were discovered by myself in the Florence Archives. Since my discovery of them, however, Signor Lupi, of the Pisa Archives, has published the "Pratica" of the 5th of July, together with most of those concerning Savonarola, in the "Archivio Storico Italiano," series iii. vol. i. part i.

[2] This letter, which is in Latin, is given by Quétif, vol. ii. p. 127, and is included in Padre Marchese's "Documenti," &c. "Archivio Storico Italiano, Appendice," vol. viii. p. 155.

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[1] Many other letters were despatched by the government. One dated 21st of July praises Ser Alessandro and Messer Ricciardo for their efforts to gain Savonarola the goodwill of the cardinals ; urges them to still greater zeal, and inquires the names of those hostile to the measure. The Signory again wrote to Bracci on the 1st of August, praising and congratulating him on the fact of "His Holiness seeming kind and well disposed to us," and they also forwarded two letters of thanks for Cardinals Capaccio and di Perugia, who had used their influence in the Friar's favour. On the 11th of August they wrote that every possible effort must be made to gain over the six cardinals entrusted with the reform of the Church, and on whom Savonarola's fate then seemed to depend. On the 26th of September they wrote to Cardinal Caraffa, urging him to do his best with the Pope ; wrote again to the same effect on the 13th ot October ; and on the 7th of November despatched two letters which will be mentioned farther on. *Vide* Padre Marchese's "Documenti," &c., "Archivio Stor. Ital. Appendice," vol viii. p. 157 and fol.

[2] As will be seen by his letters, he was actually persuaded that the Medici were friendly to Savonarola. This was one of the reasons that had compelled the Signory to despatch Bracci as orator extraordinary to Rome.

[3] Afterwards Pius III.

Rome; but Savonarola, as may well be imagined, indignantly rejected it, and said, when writing to a friend: "I should deem myself far more deeply banned were I to accept absolution at such a price." [1] But at all events the affair was another proof that the Holy Father was then showing a disposition to yield, and the Friar might have been justified in thinking that all would go well.

Just at this time one of those atrocious tragedies occurred with which the Borgia family were accustomed to stir the horror of the world, even in an age that was among the most scandalous ever recorded in history. The Duke of Gandia, the Pope's eldest son, was killed by a dagger-thrust on the night of the 14th of June, and his corpse thrown into the Tiber. His brother, Cesare Borgia, Cardinal of Valencia, was the murderer, having been impelled, it was said, to the crime by unnatural jealousy on his sister Lucrezia's account, and also by an unbounded ambition that could tolerate no equals in power. This monstrous deed stirred even the heart of Alexander Borgia to agonies of paternal grief. For the first time in his life he seemed to repent of his numerous sins, and determined to renounce them. He had accordingly withdrawn into strict solitude, and appointed six cardinals to reform the Church and thus remedy the many evils to which it was a prey.[2] This was the commission charged, as we have said, to decide on Savonarola's case.

The latter, rejoiced at any suggestion of reform or signs of true penitence in the Pope, determined to profit by the opportunity, and addressed an epistle to Alexander towards the close of the month. In this, after dexterously trying to comfort him in his present affliction, he encouraged him to persevere in his Christian purpose, and concluded by pleading his own cause in the following terms: "Most Blessed Father, the faith that worketh miracles, inspireth all noble deeds, and is sealed by the blood of the martyrs, can alone give peace and true consolation to the heart of man. Faith surpasseth sense and reason, lifteth us above this world, transporteth us to the unseen, and expandeth our spirit. Faith giveth us strength to bear adversity and rejoice in tribulation; wherefore it is written, that the just man shall never be cast down, and the just man is he that liveth in the Lord by faith. Blessed is he that is called to this gift of faith. Let your Holiness therefore reply to the blissful summons, so that your mourning be turned to joy. The Lord in His mercy passeth over all our sins. I announce things of the which I am assured, and for these things I am willing to endure all persecutions. But let your Beatitude turn a favouring eye on this work of faith, for which I labour without cease, and give ear no longer to the impious. Thus the Lord will bestow on you the essence of joy, instead of the spirit of grief; inasmuch as all my predictions are true, and none that resisteth the Lord can ever know peace. Charity moveth me to write these things, Most Blessed Father, and the hope that your Beatitude may recive true consolation from God; for the thunders of His wrath will ere long be heard, and blessed will be those that have put their trust in Him. May the Lord of all mercy console your Holiness in your tribulation!"[1]

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[1] Letter to Lodovico Pittorio, Chancellor to Duke Ercole I. of Ferrara. *Vide* Padre Marchese's "Documenti," &c., loc. cit., p. 129. The offer made by the Cardinal of Siena is also related in the "Vita Latina," at sheet 31; in Burlamacchi, p. 92; and is confirmed by Padre Marchese in a note to the letter quoted above.

[2] *Vide* Guicciardini, "Storia d'Italia," and other contemporary historians.

It was undoubtedly strange that the excommunicated Prior of St. Mark's should write to the Pope and try to console him for the death of his son by exhortations to a godly life and repentance. But, at the moment, Alexander seemed in no wise offended; on the contrary, he showed a disposition to be gracious to the Friar—an evident sign that he was still under the influence of genuine grief and remorse. But this was a brief and fugitive mood. He soon returned to his usual scandalous mode of life, with increased zest, and then made loud complaints against Savonarola for having dared to insult his fatherly sorrow.[1]

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[1] This letter, taken from the Marcian Library, in Venice, was published by Perrens in the Appendix to vol. i. of his work, at page 476. Both in the Venetian MS. and that of the Riccardi Library 2053 it bears date vii. Kal. Julii.

What is certain is, that while Savonarola and the Signory were working in one direction, many were using their best efforts in another. The Arrabbiati had already forwarded a circular to Rome signed by most of their party, in which all the old accusations against the Friar were once more repeated. On this being made known in Florence, by means of the ambassador, two other circulars were immediately prepared in support of the Friar. The first of these bore the signatures of all the two hundred and fifty brethren in the convent, who, extolling their Prior's life and doctrines, besought the Pope to remove the ban and gain favour in the sight of the Lord by aiding in the sacred enterprise. The second, reiterating all the same things, was signed by a great number of the leading citizens. When first started in July, three hundred and sixty-three signatures were quickly collected, and more would have been added, had not the alarming increase of the plague interrupted almost every kind of business.[2]

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[1] The Roman ambassador speaks of this in his letters. *Vide* in Padre Marchese, doc. xx., Bonsi's letter to the Ten. It is stated in this that the Pope complained, among other things, that Savonarola "had reproved him for the death of his son."

[2] In the Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. vii., these two declarations or letters to the Pope will be found. Among the names inscribed on the second is that of one Niccolò, son of Alessandro Machiavelli, erroneously believed by Mons. Perrens to be the famous secretary of the Republic. But the latter was the son of Bernardo Machiavelli. On the

There were already from fifty to sixty deaths daily, and although this was not considered a great number, it was sadly ominous of a still worse state of things, particularly when all Florence[1] was so densely overcrowded with strangers. The citizens now fled to their country houses, and a general panic set in. But while all were deserting the city and forsaking the business of life, Savonarola, as every one may conceive, undertook new and arduous labours. It was his duty, he felt, in this public emergency, to bring succour and comfort to the afflicted. Although precluded by his excommunication from going about among the people as a minister of the Church,[2] it will be seen that he had no light task to perform, when we remember that he had the care of 250 monks, many of whom were novices, all shut up in one convent, where the most stringent precautions were required to prevent contagion. In fact, before long, one of the community sickened, and both the plague and its terrors had gained foothold in St. Mark's. The more timid brethren wished to take flight, others besought their Prior to provide for his own safety, and several citizens placed their villas at his disposal. But Savonarola was not likely to shrink from his duty at a moment such as this. He profited by his friends' offers of hospitality to send all the novices and younger monks, including his own brother Maurelio, into the country. Thus the numbers in the convent were thinned, and he quietly remained there with a few of his more tried and devoted followers. He read to them, with

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9th of July a *Pratica* was held (*vide* Florence Archives, cod. cit., at sheet 46), to decide if anything should be done with regard to these circulars; but no decision was arrived at.

[1] See Savonarola's letter to his brother Alberto, dated 21st of July. In Padre Marchese's "Documenti," &c., loc. cit., p. 128.

[2] By forgetting the consequences of excommunication, Mons. Perrens was led to make the erroneous statement that Savonarola had shown timidity and indifference during the plague

comments, the Lamentations of Jeremiah,[1] Jonah's prophecies, and the history of Samson, and did his best to sustain their courage.

Meanwhile he sent frequent and affectionate letters to the distant members of his flock, exhorting them to face the danger with courage, and reproving the more timid for their fears. "I am using every effort," he wrote to Frà Paolo del Beccuto, who wished to leave his own convent, "to preserve our brethren from danger; but I find some of them more timid than laymen, which is a pusillanimity unworthy of ministers of religion, who should rather seek death than fear it. We must trust in the Lord, not in flight. Wherefore I hold that you ought not to absent yourself from your convent at present. The friars here meet death joyfully, as though they were going to a festival. All those tending the sick keep their health. To-day, after conversing with me, Frate Antonio da San Quintino was suddenly taken ill."[2] All Savonarola's letters at this period show much tenderness for his brethren and his family; singular firmness and serenity of spirit in the midst of these numerous perils. On the 24th of July he wrote to his brother, Maestro Alberto, at Ferrara, giving him news of their other brother, Maurelio, one of the community of St. Mark's. "Frà Maurelio is away from Florence on account of the pestilence, which, though not very severe as yet, is beginning to look serious. We have fifty or sixty deaths a day in the city—some say as many as one hundred—and nothing is seen save crosses and corpses. We are well, thanks to God; nor have I left the convent, although I have sent away more than seventy of the monks; for, as to myself, I am not afraid, and only desire to comfort the afflicted."[1] Later, on the 14th of August, he again wrote to the same brother: "Have no fear for me in the midst of the plague, for God will aid me. Although friends have invited me to many places, I could not forsake my flock, and therefore remain to console the afflicted. Likewise it is marvellous to behold the cheerfulness of those called away: friars and laity, men and women die, praising the Lord with their last breath."[2]

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[1] These are probably the discourses of which the rough, unfinished draft is contained in the little volume entitled "Alcuni sermoni devoti di F. Jeronimo Savonarola, sopra il principio della Cantica ed altri luoghi." Venice, 1556. These sermons on the Song of Solomon are only in outline; but there are some less imperfect fragments of them in Italian. The original autograph is in the Codex at St. Mark's, to which we have previously referred.

[2] It is dated 18th of August, 1497, and a Latin copy of it is to be found in Codex 2053 of the Riccardi Library. An incorrect Italian version was published at Venice in 1537 and 1547. It is also included in Mansi's "Addizioni" to Baluzio, and among the letters edited by Quétif, although wrongly dated in the latter, 8th of August.

Throughout this trying period Savonarola's energy was unwearied. He wrote a great number of letters, exhortting men to bear their tribulations in a quiet spirit and without fear of the excommunication; but it was in fighting the plague that he worked hardest of all. Nor did he think only of his monks, but also did his best by word and pen, by publishing pamphlets, and every other means, to encourage the laity, for whose benefit he composed an "Epistle to all the Chosen," sub-entitled "A Medicinal Treatise against the Plague."[3] This contained seven rules—for preserving body and mind by temperance and tranquillity, recommending moderation in food, gaiety of spirit, and charity to the sick. "Succour ye the sick," he said, "serve them and minister unto them in all ways, even if they be your enemies."[4]

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[1] Among the "Documenti" brought out by Padre Marchese, letter x.

[2] Padre Marchese, "Documenti," &c., letter xi.

[3] Written on the 15th of July, 1497; afterwards published with another epistle and a few tractates in Florence, but undated; and then in 1538 at Venice, in the little volume entitled "Alcuni devotissimi trattati di F Jeronimo Savonarola," &c.

[4] During these months Savonarola addressed numerous letters to his principal friends and adherents in different parts of Italy to inculcate virtuous and religious precepts.

Fortunately the plague did less havoc than was feared, for at the beginning of August it had already diminished, and towards the end of the month almost disappeared.[1] The citizens returned from the country and resumed their affairs ; the convent of St. Mark was again opened to the people, and on the 15th of the month the festival of the Madonna was celebrated in the inner cloister by a public and solemn thanksgiving for deliverance from peril. The city resumed its ordinary aspect, and all hoped at last for peace and tranquillity after the agitations and dangers of the year.

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[1] Its violence only lasted two months and a half, and the mortality from it was never very high.

CHAPTER III.

THE ARREST OF LAMBERTO DELL' ANTELLA. HIS REVELATIONS CONCERNING THE MEDICI PLOT. THE TRIAL AND CONDEMNATION OF ALL THE ACCUSED.

(1497.)

BUT the truce hoped for by the Florentines on the cessation of the plague was broken before it began, by an event causing more commotion in the city than anything else that had occurred since the year 1494. While Valori and Tosinghi were engaged in unravelling the threads of Piero's conspiracy, they surprised a certain Lamberto dell' Antella, one of the proscribed, on a clandestine journey to his villa, with a letter to his brother-in-law, Francesco Gualterotti, at that time a member of the Ten. This letter promised minute revelations of all Piero's schemes, and the discovery of certain matters of the highest importance to the Republic.[1]

As an old and faithful adherent of the Medici, Antella was certainly qualified to give full information of their designs. During the revolution of 1494 he and his brother Alessandro were prisoners in the Stinche, and while there received many cheering promises and encouragements from Piero, who was then in Rome. Accordingly, on making their escape, they hastened to his presence, but he received them with marked coldness, and speedily behaved to them with his usual brutality. "He kept us continually on the move," writes Lamberto dell' Antella, "in order to satisfy his mad wish of returning to Florence, and then treated us worse than dogs." Piero de' Medici, in fact, seemed unable to live without having some one to maltreat and oppress. Nevertheless the two Antella submitted to all this, and accompanied the tyrant on his expedition to the walls of Florence and his flight back to Siena; but in the latter city they chanced to incur his suspicions, and were immediately imprisoned by his command. So great was Piero's cruelty, so furious his animosity against these old and faithful adherents, that, after leaving Siena, he sent several express messengers back to Pandolfo Petrucci, the virtual lord of that Republic, begging him to cast the two brothers into the *Carnaio*, a dungeon so terrible that none ever left it alive. But Petrucci, notwithstanding his friendship for Piero, had no mind to commit murder for his sake, and liberated the prisoners on condition that they were to be fined 2,000 florins if they attempted to quit the Sienese territories. But they were too anxious to revenge themselves on Piero to submit to delay, and fled towards Florence at the first opportunity. Lamberto considered it a delightful stroke of luck, when about the 1st of August he was seized and taken before the magistrates with his letter on his person, in the manner we have described.[1]

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[1] Nardi, Machiavelli, and many other historians speak of the capture of this Antella; and the Milanese orator in Florence also makes frequent reference to the affair. *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, where the letter brought by Antella is given in doc. i., and those written on the subject by the Milanese orator in doc. ii.

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[1] These particulars are derived from the letter found on Antella's person, and from the confession he afterwards wrote. According to the information given by the Ferrarese orator (Cappelli, p. 86, doc. 119), the capture occurred on the 4th of August. In a letter of the 10th of

But the Eight, on finding and reading this letter, followed the barbarous custom of the time by immediately putting poor Lamberto to torture; and after giving him at least four turns of the rack, interrogated him closely on every point, so that he should confess the *pure truth.* On noting down his replies, and finding that several citizens of great influence and high reputation were implicated in the plot,[1] they carried the affair before the Signory, declaring that they must decline to give judgment in so weighty a case. The Signory, however, made answer that, according to the statutes, the Eight alone were empowered to judge political offences.[2] Nevertheless, in view of the importance of the case, five Arroti[3] and seven officers of the Ten were chosen to assist them in carrying on the trial. Thereupon the business was more closely investigated, and Lamberto dell' Antella, being offered free pardon, penned a lengthy report of all Piero de' Medici's schemes and of the names of his adherents in Florence.[4] He even revealed certain preliminaries of a fresh plot, by which Piero was to be secretly brought into Florence on the night of the approaching 15th of August. Many of the citizens being away in the country—some to enjoy the summer season, and others to escape the plague—Piero

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August, addressed by the Signory to their ambassador in Rome, the affair is mentioned as having already taken place. Florence Archives, "Signori," "Carteggio," "Missive," "Minutari," 16, at sheet 400.

[1] The above-quoted despatch of the Signory states that Antella's arrest has led "to the discovery of the root of certain malignant humours in persons who *cannot be prosecuted*," but tries to attenuate the importance of the affair by adding that "these be all *vain attempts*, inasmuch as no republic could be more united in its intent to destroy tyranny than our own."

[2] For the whole narrative of this trial we have always referred to authentic documents, and among the historians have preferred to rely on the authority of Pitti's "Istoria Fiorentina," in the "Archivio Storico Italiano," vol. i. pp. 42–50, which furnishes a most minute account of these events, and one clearly based upon documentary evidence.

[3] Citizens qualified to give advice in emergencies.

[4] This is the narrative to which we have frequently referred.

de' Medici hoped to be able to rouse a general revolt in his favour by distributing bread and money to the hungry populace, and allowing them to sack the houses of the rich, and, having once gained possession of the Palace, to assume the government of the city.[1] It was a mad design and too audacious for Piero to venture to carry out; nevertheless the preliminary intrigues which had been woven served to show his intent, and proved that the Republic was still exposed to great danger.

In the midst of these agitations the twenty citizens charged to try the case met in council after a careful examination of the evidence, and took their oath to administer justice with strict impartiality, regardless of the rank or influence of the persons implicated in the plot. They then ordained that the Piazza should be guarded by armed men; that the *condottieri* (mercenary captains) should hold their troops ready for action at a moment's notice; and that no one should leave the city. They also called out the guards of the Signory, and, to avoid exciting suspicion, sent them to summon, in the Signory's name, all the citizens most deeply compromised by Antella's revelations. Many instantly fled; others, on the contrary, obeyed the summons; and the final result of the trial was that five of the persons in the magistrates' hands were found guilty of high treason, and, according to the law, deserving of capital punishment.

Bernardo del Nero, aged seventy-five years, was the most important of these criminals on account of his great influence and sagacity. In point of fact the only real charge proved against him was that of having known of the plot and yet failed to denounce it; the which crime was held to be all the more heinous, since he was Gonfalonier of the Republic at that time. Next in order of guilt were Giannozzo Pucci, a youth of great talent, and Lorenzo Tornabuoni, who was the general admiration of Florence as a model of grace and fashion. The popular hatred burnt most fiercely against these men, who, after being acknowledged partisans of Piero, to whom indeed Tornabuoni was related,[1] had, by their constant attendance on Savonarola's sermons, long contrived to make every one believe them to be his most zealous adherents. The other two persons inculpated were Giovanni Cambi,[2] a wealthy merchant, and Niccolò Ridolfi, head of the family of that name, and who was also connected with the Medici.[3]

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[1] Nardi speaks of this in his "Istoria di Firenze," vol. i. p. 133.

The trial being concluded, the twelve additional citizens withdrew, leaving the Eight alone to pronounce the verdict. But being decidedly unwilling to face the hatred of so many powerful families, these again appealed to the Signory, who again declined to assume an office that was not legally incumbent on them. At last the Gonfalonier, Messer Domenico Bartoli, seeing the culpable weakness of the magistrates in refusing to fulfil their duty from fear of the great, proposed to submit the case to the decision of the Greater Council, which, according to the new law, constituted the supreme court of appeal. But the counsel for the defence resolutely opposed this suggestion on the score "that it were unwise to communicate secrets of the State to so great a multitude, or to run the risk of many different opinions when the verdict of the principal magistrates should suffice."[4] The gist of the matter was that, whereas on the one hand the magistrates shrank from doing their duty, the accused, on the other, being equally afraid of the laws and the fury of the people, were anxious for delay, in the hope that on the election of a new Signory things might take a decided turn in their favour. Three of the present Signory were already on their side, and having now succeeded in winning over a fourth in the person of Michele Berti, a kinsman of Bernardo del Nero, these four votes enabled them to prevent any decision hostile to their purpose.[1] Thus they gained their end, and the final sentence was referred to the judgment of a fresh Pratica, to be held on the 17th of August. This was a signal advantage; every day brought them nearer to the new election; urgent recommendations to mercy were momentarily expected from the allies,[2] to whom many pressing appeals had been sent; and Piero de' Medici was already collecting a large force in Romagna. Moreover, being manifestly guilty in the eyes of the law, the only hope of the accused was in delay. But their adversaries were perfectly aware of all this, on their side were using every effort to bring the affair to a speedy conclusion; and it was accordingly foreseen that the adjourned debate would be a pitched battle.

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[1] Piero's grandmother was a Tornabuoni.

[2] Not to be confused with Giovanni Cambi, the historian, who was entirely devoted to the popular party; nor with the "*rich* Cambi" of Via del Cocomero, mentioned elsewhere. The prisoner was one of the Cambi of Santa Trinità.

[3] His son had married one of Piero de' Medici's sisters. For all these particulars, *vide* Nardi, "Istorie di Firenze," i. p. 130; Cerretani; Parenti; Guicciardini, "Storia Fiorentina," chap. xv.; and Pitti.

[4] Pitti, "Storia Fiorentina," p. 43 and fol.

The Signory had requested the presence of some two hundred of the principal citizens of Florence, and although they did not all obey the summons, the meeting was attended by the sixteen Gonfaloniers of the Companies, the Twelve Worthies, the Ten of War, the Eight of Guard and Custody, the officers of the Monte, the Conservators of the Law, the captains of the Guelf party, many *Arroti*, and finally the Senate, a Council of Eighty, and the Signory—in all an assembly of 136 persons. The counsel for the accused were full of hope that day, trusting, should all other means fail, that with so numerous a tribunal there would be little difficulty in obtaining a fresh postponement of the verdict. But, as soon as the depositions had been read, the Signory ordered all present to withdraw to their respective benches to consult on the verdict, after which each bench was to freely report its opinion, regardless of the old usage forbidding the expression of any view opposed to that of the Signory. The votes were quickly given to the effect that the five accused should be beheaded and their property confiscated to the State.[1] The counsel for the defence were so thunderstruck and dismayed by this verdict that they were completely paralyzed.[2] Nevertheless, remembering that four members of the Signory were in their favour, they began to protest that the words of a few individuals could not represent the opinions of all, and that every one should be allowed to vote separately. They hoped by means of so new and unprecedented a measure to throw the assembly into disorder, since many who were unaccustomed to speak in the presence of the Signory might be confused, and afford an opportunity for calling their votes in question, and obtaining fresh delays. But this design was thwarted by Francesco Valori, who promptly took his post by the Signory's table, and summoning the notary to publicly record his words, cried in a loud voice: that he judged those citizens to be deserving of death and confiscation. His example was followed by the rest, who almost all concurred in the sentence he had pronounced. In this way the Signory were compelled to charge the Eight with the execution of the verdict; and when these magistrates came to record their own votes, they were found to have confirmed the sentence by a majority of six against two.[1]

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[1] The Signory being composed of nine members, no measure could be carried by less than six votes; the same number was required in the Eight, since two-thirds constituted the legal majority. When a decision was passed by a majority of votes, it was said *to be voted by the greater number of beans.*

[2] *Vide* Somenzi's letters to Ludovico the Moor, in doc. ii. of Appendix to the Italian edition.

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[1] Pitti, "Istoria Fiorentina," loc. cit.

[2] Pitti considers that the notary must have neglected to record the few contrary votes, being unable to credit that none should have been given.

The defenders of the accused then felt that all was lost, but as a last resource asked the advice of Messer Guidantonio Vespucci, a celebrated jurisconsult, and one of the most powerful of the Arrabbiati. He immediately suggested an appeal to the Greater Council from the verdict of the Eight, in the manner authorized by the new law of the Six Beans. Right of appeal was immediately demanded, and when the votes of the assembly were taken, it was found that four of the Signory were in favour of it. This led to so much disagreement and disorder, that the Pratica had to be adjourned to the 21st of August. Thus, after all, the counsel for the defence had once more gained an advantage.

Meanwhile the discord in the Palace had spread through the town, and people went about everywhere crying: that justice must be done; that the country was in danger; and that the postponement of the affair from one Pratica to another might prove fatal to the Republic. At the same time anonymous letters were being circulated in Florence, fiercely denouncing the weakness of the magistrates. Public feeling was still in this state when the second Pratica met on the 21st of August, to decide whether or no the right of appeal should be granted; and it is by no means surprising that the strife should have been of the hottest. It was declared on the one side, in the exaggerated and decidedly democratic phraseology that the Mediceans were so apt in employing whenever it suited their purpose, that: "Right of appeal against the sentence of the Eight was sanctioned by the law; that the people was absolute lord of the Republic; hence that everything must be referred to the people; that the people had power of life and death over the citizens." But these words from the lips of those who had conspired for the restoration of the Medici in Florence naturally excited the indignation of the opposite party, who hotly replied: "That from the outset, as every one knew, the accused had been allowed the option of being judged by the people, but had declined to profit by it. That the law of appeal had been made solely to deprive the tribunal of the Six Beans of the power to pass sentence of death or confiscation on the citizens; and that in this case the accused had not only been condemned by the Eight and the Signory, but by the joint verdict of all the magistrates and principal citizens. Likewise that no law could grant right of appeal from a tribunal-extraordinary such as this; and that no one demanding it could have any other object in view than that of gaining time while the Republic was disturbed, the country in danger, its enemies in expectation of aid from without, and even certain members of the Signory engaged in conspiring against freedom. Can you be ignorant," they concluded, "that the tyrant is again collecting an army? Do you not see that you are opening your gates to Piero de' Medici?"[1] At this point the *Collegi*[2] were inflamed by so great a fury, that, starting to their feet, they threatened to display their banners and lead the people to demolish the houses of all who should oppose the execution of so just and unavoidable a sentence. Upon this there was a great uproar and confusion in the hall, but, in the midst of the din, the voice of Messer Francesco degli Albizzi could be heard repeatedly shouting in tones of thunder: "Let justice be done, let justice be done!" Meanwhile the defenders of the accused were doing their best to increase the tumult, in the hope that this day also would come to an end without any decision being pronounced. In fact, evening was already at hand, and the contest still going on without any result; for the popular party were so maddened by fury that they too impeded the regular course of the debate, and thus unconsciously played into their adversaries' hands.

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[1] Pitti, loc. cit.

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[1] *Vide* Pitti, who gives exact reports of the speeches delivered in the Pratica. *Vide* also Cerretani and Parenti.

[2] *I.e.*, the Gonfaloniers of the Companies and the Twelve Worthies, but in this instance mainly the former.

But at this juncture some ambassadorial despatches and private letters arrived, and, being read aloud to the meeting by the Signory, roused all to new fury. For their contents proved that the Republic was unquestionably in the greatest danger; that the enemies of Florence were intriguing on all sides, encouraged by the Duke of Milan [1] and actively aided by the Pope, and that the latter was only feigning moderation and friendship towards the Republic the better to accomplish its overthrow. Upon this a second reading of all the depositions made at the trial was demanded, in order to compare them with the evidence contained in the letters; after which the citizens withdrew to their benches to deliberate afresh; and according to usage each bench deputed a single member to express its views.[2]

The general opinion was that the capital sentence should be executed without delay; nevertheless the knowledge that the Signory were decidedly in favour of the accused caused many to hesitate and fear to speak freely. Even Guglielmo Altoviti, as the mouthpiece of the same Gonfaloniers of the Companies, who, shortly before, had threatened to put to the sack the abodes of all persons opposed to the execution of the sentence, now declared: "That even in his bench some were disposed to concede right of appeal." But Messer Francesco Gualterotti, in the name of the Ten of Liberty, spoke more frankly, and said: "The greater disturbance you make in the city, the better will you assist our enemies' designs. It is clear that all the potentates of Italy have plotted against Florence, and that Rome is the centre of every intrigue woven against us. The object of the desired appeal is not to learn the will of the people, which has been decidedly expressed more than once, but merely to gain time, and invoke foreign aid. Nevertheless, if your Excellencies are resolved at all costs to grant right of appeal, it were best to make sure of the council first of all, and to lose no time in assembling it, since delay can lead to nought but trouble both within and without the walls. And it likewise behooves us to keep the troops in readiness to defend the Republic from all the enemies by which it is surrounded." The next to be heard were the doctors of the law, whose opinion on the question had naturally great weight; and their representative candidly declared: "that the present danger would justify their refusal to grant an appeal,[1] and that even were it granted, it must be fixed for the morrow, since the least delay might be fatal." The Eight, who were the ordinary tribunal for State offences, expressed the opinion "that right of appeal should be decidedly refused, since the city would be ruined if the defence succeeded in obtaining from the council a reversal of the sentence already pronounced." Lastly came the twelve benches of private citizens, who were almost unanimously of opinion that "the sentence should be executed, and without delay." But even this declaration concluded with the usual formula: "Nevertheless our approval will be accorded to any decision that your Excellencies may be pleased to take."[1] Such was the influence of bygone customs, not only under the new liberal *régime*, but even in the midst of this tremendous popular excitement!

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[1] This is confirmed by the letters of the Milanese orator, given in doc. ii. of the Appendix to the Italian edition. *Vide* also doc. ix.

[2] Nardi, Pitti, and others describe the effect produced by the arrival of these despatches. A "Frammento di Pratica," discovered by me in the "Archivio delle Riformagioni," begins a summary of the discussion in the following terms: "Our high and magnificent Signory, having read aloud several letters received from Ser Alessandro in Rome and Messer Francesco Pepi in Milan, and several more, unsigned, from other citizens resident in Rome, . . . and having demanded advice thereon, &c." (Florence Archives, "Consulte e Pratiche," Registro 65, at sheet 81 and fol.)

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[1] "According to the statutes, whenever public disturbance is feared, it is customary to refuse right of appeal." So, too, says Guicciardini in his "Storia Fiorentina," p. 160.

It was now ten o'clock at night; so the Signory, encouraged by this moderation of tone, and noting manifest signs of weariness in the assembly, again tried to spin out the debate, in the hope of being able to dissolve the meeting without coming to any decision. But the prevailing calm suddenly changed to a tempest of fury; for Valori, divining the intention of the government, sprang to his feet like a raging lion, and with flaming eyes rushed towards the Signory, and, seizing the ballot-box, rapped it violently on the table, crying in a threatening voice: "Let justice be done, or there will be a revolt!" Luca Martini, the president for the day, was cowed by his words, and instantly put the question to the vote. Five of the Signory voted for death, but the other four being still in favour of the accused, voted for the appeal. Thereupon Valori, throwing etiquette to the winds, and without any show of respect for the Signory, shouted in a voice hoarse with rage: "Why then have your Excellencies summoned all these citizens, who every one of them, as recorded by the notary, had already voted against these plotters of novelties, these subverters of our country and destroyers of freedom? Have not all here present confirmed their vote? Do you not hear the universal cry of all who care for the public safety? Do you not feel the imminence of our danger? Your Excellencies should remember that you are placed here by the people of Florence on purpose to defend the liberty of Florence, and if you betray your duty in order to favour traitorous citizens, you may be sure there will be plenty to defend so just and holy a cause, to the peril of all who are opposed to it." Then, extending his arm with a resolute gesture, he again offered the ballot-box to Martini, and the latter, being either conquered or convinced, put the sentence to the vote in the following terms: "Seeing that the counsels and reports of the magistrates, Senate, and other citizens are all in favour of execution; and seeing that delay would lead to great peril and disturbance, it is hereby ordained that without delay, this same night, the Council of Eight shall put to death the five citizens upon whom they have already pronounced sentence in this meeting." The suddenness of Martini's motion, and above all the ferocious air of Valori and the threatening gesture with which he passed round the ballot-box, had so intimidating an effect upon the four dissentient members of the Signory that they also voted for death. After which the order, already drawn up, was formally consigned to the Eight, who immediately repaired to the palace of the Captain of Justice to make arrangements for the execution.[1]

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[1] All this part of the discussion is a faithful report of the "Frammento di Pratica," before quoted.

Meanwhile the defenders of the condemned men led their clients, barefooted and chained, through the assembly, hoping that their appearance and supplications might stir the pity of the crowd; but all was in vain, for the citizens could scarcely contain their rage at the sight of the criminals. The latter were then taken to the Bargello's palace [2] and left for a short space with their confessors to prepare their souls for death. During this time Valori, who seemed to have become almost absolute master of the city, placed 300 foot-soldiers to guard the palace against any attack from the criminals' kinsmen or friends. All was already arranged in the courtyard of the Bargello, and so dense and motley a crowd poured into it from hour to hour, that, as a contemporary writer has said, "it seemed a pit of hell." There were bands of savage-looking men with weapons in their hands and vengeance in their hearts, and groups of nobles here and there, who appeared to shrink from view for fear of compromising their safety, and to be trying to hide their grief and dismay for the friends or kinsmen whose death they were about to witness. We may imagine what cruel insults and pangs of bitterness these men must have endured that night! Meanwhile the tumult of clashing weapons, curses, and yells went on increasing until two o'clock in the morning, when a funereal silence fell on the throng. For now the condemned prisoners were brought out one by one, accompanied by a criminal judge and a confessor, and led to the place of execution, where each of them in turn calmly laid his head on the block. All submitted to their fate with the utmost fortitude. Their bodies were afterwards delivered up to their kindred.

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[1] As we have already said, the whole of this narrative and all these speeches are faithfully compiled from Pitti, pp. 42–50, and the before-quoted "Frammento di Pratica." *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. x.

[2] Pitti, loc. cit., Cerretani, and Nardi. According to Pitti the prisoners

The same night, the Signory sent a despatch to Rome giving an account of the event in the following terms: "The whole city has been united against these traitorous and parricidal citizens, whose execution was desired even

were conducted to the palace of the Bargello ; according to Cerretani, to that of the Captain of Justice. Both these officials long held residence in the palace adjoining the old Custom House, and near that of the Signory with which it communicated. At the time of this trial there was only a Bargello, but shortly after, as we shall see, his post was abolished, and that of the Captain of Justice re-established in its stead. It was only at a much later period that there was again a Bargello, who was then established in the palace now designated by his name, and previously known as the palace of the Podestà.

by their own kin. And it is now hoped that the State may be sound and healthy for a time, since all are bent on extirpating every other evil growth of the same kind. God have mercy on the souls of those men, for as traitors to their country, they are verily in sore need of His aid."[1]

Such was the end of five citizens, who by birth, influence, and long experience of public and private affairs had ranked among the first in the Republic. Slight punishments were inflicted upon a few others who had been privy to the attempt; but Frà Mariano da Genazzano, having made good his escape to Rome, could only be sentenced to exile, although ascertained to have been one of the most guilty. The two brothers Antella not only had their lives spared, but also their fines remitted, were allowed to bear arms, freed from the ban formerly pronounced on them, and made the recipients of other favours.[2] All the depositions and documents of this State trial were scrupulously kept secret, so that all memory of it might be as far as possible effaced[3] now the authors of the plot had expiated their crime.

An important point should next be noted; namely, that throughout this time of public ferment Savonarola had remained secluded in his convent, without taking any share in the excitement, and wholly absorbed in revising the proofs of his "Triumph of the Cross." Neither in the histories, memoirs, correspondence, or biographies of the period do we find a single word to indicate whether Savonarola was favourable or unfavourable to any of the accused. During his own trial he only alluded to the affair twice: the first time, when, in speaking of Bernardo del Nero, he said: "His death gave me no satisfaction, I should have been well pleased had he been banished;[1] on the second occasion, he added: "That regarding those five citizens he had taken no special concern; save that he had slightly recommended Lorenzo Tornabuoni to Valori's mercy."[2] This plainly shows that the sole object of his interference was to try to moderate the general fury against the accused. Yet, no sooner had men begun to calumniate Savonarola's memory, than all declared that it was chiefly owing to him that right of appeal had been denied to the prisoners, although he himself had been the most energetic promoter of the law conferring that right. No one chose to remember that Vespucci and not Savonarola had been the proposer of that law in the form in which it was ultimately carried, or that the Friar had not only been dissatisfied with it, but caused his followers to oppose it, since his own object was to establish the right of appeal to a limited council instead of to the Consiglio Maggiore.[3] And, on the other hand, the history of this period proves beyond doubt that during the trial of the conspirators, it was impossible for him to exercise any influence over the people or judges. Being under the ban of excommunication and with negotiations for its removal still pending, it would have been not only a grave blunder, but sheer madness to return to the pulpit just then, and he was never known to resort to indirect or clandestine means. As to Valori, who undoubtedly did his utmost to secure the prisoners' condemnation, it must be confessed that he seems to have been unduly influenced by jealous hatred towards his political opponent Bernardo del Nero.[1] Although a generous and loyal man, his actions invariably proceeded from impulse rather than reason; and he showed himself so incapable of self-control during the heated discussions at the trial, that it is quite improbable that he would have yielded to the authority of Savonarola who was secluded in his cloister at the other end of Florence.

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[1] Florence Archives, "Registro di Minute di Lettere ad Ambasciatori," 1496-97. *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition in doc. xi., the letter dated August 21st.

[2] Nevertheless the decree freeing them from the ban of outlawry is of a later date.

[3] Nardi, Cerretani, Pitti, Parenti, Guicciardini, &c.

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[1] *Vide*, in Appendix to the Italian edition, the printed version of the trial published during the fifteenth century. The reader should bear in mind that all the alterations then made in the documents were always and entirely to Savonarola's disadvantage; therefore every statement they allege in his favour may be fully relied upon.

[2] During his trial by the Papal Commissioners. *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition.

[3] *Vide* bk. ii. chap. v. of this work. Machiavelli and Guicciardini ("Storia d'Italia") were among the first to bring these charges against Savonarola, and almost all the other writers followed their lead. Although both of these most influential historians had been acquainted with Savonarola in their youth, they only wrote about him at a much later period, and when his memory was already loaded with a thousand false accusations. Hence, they did not always steer clear of the many calumnies then afloat to the injury of the republican Friar. But even the authority of a Guicciardini and a Machiavelli cannot prevail against the truth, the which truth is clearly established by documents of indisputable weight. Moreover, even Guicciardini is most favourable to the Friar, and avoids all erroneous statements concerning him, in his "Storia d'Italia," written at a period less remote from Savonarola's day. In the

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second edition of his "Nuovi Documenti" (Florence, Sansoni, 1888) Signor Gherardi has added (pp. 112–124) a long extract from Parenti regarding right of appeal from the *Six Beans*. According to this authority, the Ottimati opposed this right of appeal in the first instance from fear of diminishing the power of the Council of Eight, of which they frequently formed part. The Popolani also opposed the measure, fearing that it might lessen the power of the Signory. Thereupon the Ottimati, being hostile to the Signory at the time, changed their minds and joined the advanced party, which not only favoured right of appeal, but proposed appeal to the Greater Council, a measure that naturally met with the popular approbation. Thus, as often occurs when the public mind is confused, the least cautious and most extreme measure was that which gained the day. According to the same chronicler, the general confusion was brought to a climax by the sermons of Frà Domenico da Ponzo, who, at the express command of Savonarola's foes, was daily inveighing against him from the pulpit, though no one could exactly understand the real drift of these attacks. Parenti, who had no liking for the Prior of St. Mark's, declares that the latter not only favoured but first proposed this law of appeal, without, however, asserting that Savonarola either favoured, or much less proposed, an appeal to the Greater Council, a measure that, as we have already proved by his own sermons, was carried against his will.

[1] Guicciardini alludes to this enmity in his "Storia di Firenze," p. 159.

Finally, it should be remembered that, but for the receipt of the ambassadorial despatches[1] at the very moment when all present at the Pratica were burning with indignation against the lukewarmness of the magistrates and their too evident partiality, it is probable that, even then, the accused might have succeeded in obtaining a postponement of the verdict.

Thus, many and totally unforeseen events combined to bring sentence of death on these five citizens; and it must be acknowledged that not only in the eyes of the law, but by the general opinion of the people, according to all ideas of justice at that period, they thoroughly deserved their fate. It is true that the trial was not conducted with all the usual judicial forms; but although the first irregularity was caused by the excessive timidity of the magistrates, who, after finding the accused guilty of high treason, shrank from condemning them to death, in order to give them a chance of appeal, the worst and more criminal irregularity was committed by the counsel for the defence. After having first refused to submit the case to the Greater Council, and then requested and obtained the favour of being judged by a special tribunal composed of all the principal magistrates and citizens of Florence, they had forfeited all right to demand an appeal. They had nothing to urge in favour of this demand, save their very evident motive of wishing to proceed from one irregularity to another, in order to gain time and await the election of a fresh Signory. How could the magistrates again lend themselves to these designs, or the assembly condone so great an outrage on legality? Besides, the popular verdict was most decisive, and was additionally confirmed a few days after the execution, when Ridolfi's son appeared before the Greater Council to implore the remission of the decree confiscating his father's property. His demand was thrice put to the vote and thrice rejected.[1] Accordingly, neither by the laws of the State, nor the votes of the Greater Council could the five prisoners have been acquitted.[2] As to Savonarola he had neither the will nor the power to influence a sentence, decreed in the heat, or rather fury, of a whirlwind, of debate.

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[1] From Somenzi's letters (in Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. ii.), it is plainly evident, that even when the accused were in prison and undergoing trial, the Mediceans still entertained great hopes of being able to overthrow the popular government, with the help of the allies, and were actively labouring to that end.

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[1] Pitti and Cerretani.

[2] It has been justly observed by Guicciardini, "Storia Fiorentina," p. 164, that in no case could they have been acquitted, that accordingly it would have been far better from the beginning to have steadily adhered to the forms prescribed by the law.

CHAPTER IV.

SAVONAROLA'S MINOR WORKS, BOTH PUBLISHED AND UNPUBLISHED. HIS "TRIUMPH OF THE CROSS."

AFTER the death of Bernardo del Nero and his confederates the Piagnoni became all powerful; and during the following six months three Signories of the popular party were elected in succession, whose sole difficulty in governing was that of carrying on the business of the State with an absolutely exhausted exchequer.[1] But the Pope's enmity to Savonarola became fiercer than ever and was a continual source of affliction to the Government and people. It was not only grievous to them to witness the unjust treatment of a man who had rendered such eminent service to his country and religion, but it was also painful to be compelled in the Friar's defence, to place themselves and the Republic in an attitude of continual and growing disaccord with Rome. Nevertheless, they daily despatched pressing instructions to their orator, Alessandro Bracci, to do his utmost to obtain absolution for Savonarola. "It is our desire," wrote the Signory, "that ye should knock at every door, and shout aloud, and make every possible effort, and neither cease nor spare your labour until this purpose has been achieved." [1]

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[1] The Milanese orator wrote to the Duke as follows: "It may now be said, Illustrissimo Signore, that the Friar's party have the government entirely in their grasp" (*Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. ii.).

The Pope deigned no reply, but waited a favourable moment to fulfil his designs; while Savonarola, profiting by the truce, remained shut up in his convent, and, with an energy that was truly marvellous, devoted his whole time to the composition of new tractates and the publication of those he had already written. Passing these briefly in review, we will bestow our chief attention on his great work, "The Triumph of the Cross," which was given to the world at this time.

But, first of all, we should mention a short pamphlet, entitled "Lamentatio Sponsæ Christi." In this the author deplores the disgrace brought on the whole of the Christian flock by the clergy of his day.[2] He would also seem to have published simultaneously another pamphlet, entitled "A Treatise on the Seven Steps of the Spiritual Life of St. Buonaventura,"[1] which, as the name indicates, is merely a brief summary of the work of that ancient Father of the Church. Savonarola also addressed many printed epistles

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[1] Letter of the Signory, dated 7th of November, 1497. *Vide* Padre Marchese, doc. xvii. p. 163.

[2] "Lamentatio Sponsæ Christi, et Exhortatio ad fideles," Anno Domini 1497. This edition is undated, and without the author's name. It only comprises two sheets, and the pamphlet concludes at the third page and is followed by a poem in nineteen strophes, beginning thus: *Voi toccate la chiavetta*, &c. It has never been ascertained by whom these verses were written. The whole pamphlet was afterwards prohibited in Rome. Another little work must be mentioned that has been attributed to Savonarola both by Meier and Audin de Rians, but that we cannot believe to be his. It is entitled, "Loqui prohibeor et tacere non possum," and is undated. Meier saw it in MS. in the Boutourlin Library; and Audin quotes from the printed fifteenth-century edition, of which there is a copy in the Riccardi Library, that we, too, have examined. It is a pamphlet of six sheets, unsigned and undated. As regards title, style, and ideas, it differs little from Savonarola's works, although its more studied Latinity at once made us doubt that it could be from his pen. It begins as follows: "The shepherds let the lambs stray at their will, drive away those that remain in the right path, and threaten with most severe punishment those that seek the fount of pure water; hence speech is forbidden me (*loqui prohibeor*)). But I see these bad shepherds shut out their flocks from the pastures, and the lean, starving lambs left a prey to wild beasts; wherefore I cannot hold my peace (*tacere non possum*). The judges and elders to whom judgment pertains sit on the seat of perdition and subvert all order. Arbitrary power replaces law, and wickedness stifles the faint utterances of the just; wherefore speech is forbidden me (*loqui prohibeor*)." Continuing in the same strain, the

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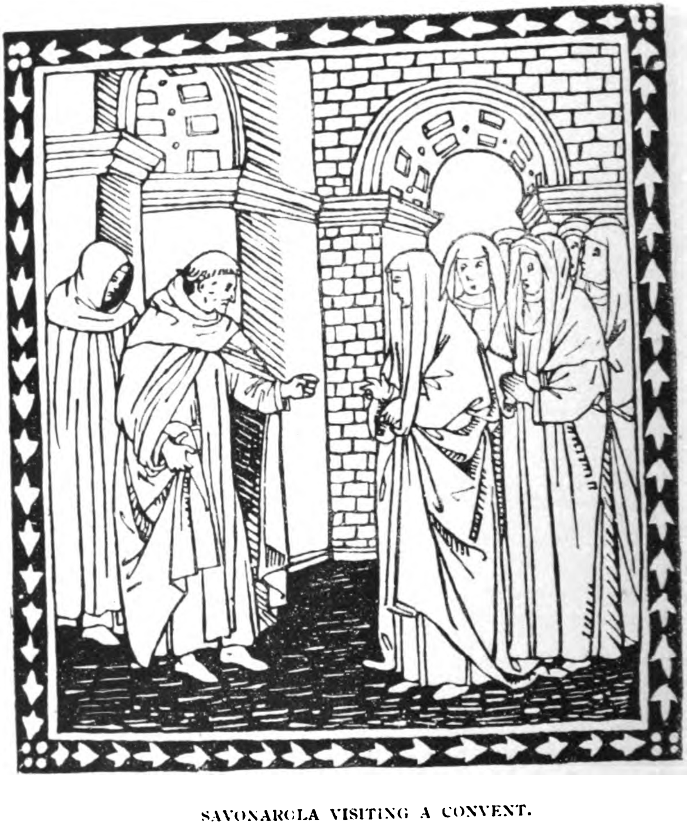
first part of this composition concludes with these words: "*Ideo loqui cogor et exclamare compellor.*" And then, full of hope, the author exclaims: "Behold, now let every servant give praise unto his Lord. My mouth is filled, O Lord, with Thy love, and I will sing Thy glory; already the night endeth, and the dawn of a better day is at hand; our redemption is near." It goes on in this way for six or seven pages to the end. The whole pamphlet consists of six sheets.

All this might well be ascribed to Savonarola, were it not that in two or three places we find him distinctly alluded to as being already dead. Take the following instance: "Fratres et discipuli carissimi qui, ab ipso fonte uberrimo, prædulcissima eloquia, magno oblectamento, frequentius auserunt; qui tanquam exanimes et velut stupidi altiora doctrinæ mirabantur; qui virum omni quavis scientia, præclarissimum magnaque sanctitate venerandum firmissime asserebant, instanter prædicabant, omnique demonstrationum genere id animis hominum inserere nitebantur. Nunc, ac si lethæi fluminis unda demersi, in silentio trahunt dies suos et ad uniuscuiusque rei pavent occursum. Nonnulli ex eis, timore perterriti, digito labris imposito silentium indicunt, si quos noverent ilari vultu loquentes magnalia Dei. Nec desunt qui asperior obedientiæ malleo simplicium dorsum incurvent, quin et obliquis oculis intuentur quos pristinæ fidei quippiam servasse crediderint." At this point we find noted in ancient characters on the margin of the copy in the Riccardi Library (No. 123 of the fifteenth-century editions) the words: *faith in the Friar* (*fede nel Frate*); and at another point where the author names the "Martyres Dei inclytos," the same hand has written on the margin: "*the Friar and his three companions*"; an evident sign that the pamphlet was even at that time known to be the work, not of Savonarola, but one of his disciples after his death. In fact, the Riccardi copy is bound up with many other pamphlets by Savonarola and his disciples, and the volume begins with an epistle by Gio. Franc. Pico della Mirandola, "A li electi di Dio abitanti nella città di Firenze" and dated *The Day of Resurrection*, 1498. In this epistle Pico exhorts his readers to have faith in the doctrines of Savonarola, whose prophecies are all certain to be fulfilled. Possibly, the above quoted pamphlet may also be from the pen of Pico the younger.

[1] "Trattato sopra i sette gradi della vita spirituale di San Buonaventura." An edition of this, dated 1496, is quoted in the bibliography prefixed to Burlamacchi. The greater part of these Savonarolian pamphlets were reprinted in various Venetian editions, three of which appeared in 1535, 1537, and 1538, under the title of, "Molti devotissimi trattati," &c.



SAVONAROLA VISITING A CONVENT.

to the friars of St. Mark's.[1] In one, "On the Exercise of Charity," he showed how charity may be practised in all places and conditions, hence, that every true Christian should say like the philosopher of old—*omnia mea mecum porto.* In another, written in 1497, on the Eve of the Assumption, he congratulates them on their steadfastness; and treats, in a third, "On the fitting mode of offering prayer."[2] Also, being daily besieged from all sides by requests for letters, he determined to put an end to these demands by his beautiful "Epistle to the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Dominic,"[3] commonly known as *the Sisters of Annalena.* In this he said: "Continual writing is useless, if those who read take no profit by it. I have already written so much as to include every point of the Christian life; wherefore I cannot again take up my pen, for the fruitless multiplication of tracts. It may be useful in sermons to repeat the same things over and over again, inasmuch as spoken words fly and do not remain firmly impressed; whereas written words should be read again and again. The Holy Gospel was neither written on paper, nor on tables of stone; but was impressed on the hearts of the apostles and thus worked great miracles. Ye that are always craving new exhortations and new epistles, are of those that by reading much to little profit never learn anything. It was more profitable to Saint Antonio to have hearkened to the words: *Go, sell all that thou hath, give it to the poor, and follow me*, than it profits many great theologians to turn over and over the whole mass of theology. Wherefore, my beloved, there being already enough works in the Vulgate for the salvation of the whole world, we must not needlessly swell the numbers of tractates and epistles ; but rather con those already written and put their precepts into practice." [1]

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[1] "Dello adoperarsi in carità."

[2] "Del discreto modo di fare orazione." This was printed in Florence in 1479; and in the above-mentioned Venetian collection: "Molti devotissimi trattati," &c.

[3] "Epistola alle suore del terzo Ordine di San Domenico ea."

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[1] Given in Florence, in the Convent of St. Mark, on the 17th day of October, 1497 ; printed in Florence without date. We will here mention some other pamphlets written by Savonarola either this year or earlier. First of all, there was the "Esposizione dei dieci Comandamenti," addressed to the Abbess of the Murate convent, and printed in Florence in 1495. It is a minute and careful guide to self-examination. His "Epistle to the Countess della Mirandola," on her intention of becoming a nun, was also printed in 1495, and then repeatedly republished. It turns on the end to be kept in view when assuming the conventual garb, and of the method of achieving this end ; and on the perfect union with Christ that the faithful should seek to attain, by causing him to live in their souls.

"The Ten Rules of Prayer in Times of Great Tribulation" were printed in 1497, together with the Epistle to the Sisters of Annalena. Of the former work, Meier quotes an edition of 1495. The rules are these : (1) To pray God to send us good shepherds ; (2) To be taught to distinguish between true prophets and false ; (3) To be made to learn that outward ceremonies are of no avail, unless they be informed by the inward spirit (of faith) ; (4) To be taught to love simplicity and despise earthly things ; (5) That God may confirm our enlightenment by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These rules are to enable us to avoid tribulations ; the other five to strengthen us to bear tribulations when they come. They are as follows : (1) To frequently receive the sacrament ; (2) To be instant in prayer ; (3) To implore the Lord to keep the power of evil in check ; (4) To speedily make an end of it ; (5) To grant perfection to the good, and bring sinners to repentance.

"Tractate on the Mystery of the Cross." This is a representation of the cross, with a few mottoes and a brief explanation.

"Tractate on the Sacrament and Mystery of the Mass." It is only of two pages, recapitulating things already said.

"Rules for all vowed to religion, composed by Frà Jeronimo, and given by him to his brethren." (1) Poverty ; (2) Chastity ; (3) Obedience ; (4) Towards the renunciation of all vain amusements ; (5) For the avoidance of evil conversation ; (6) Continual prayer. The pamphlet ends with a picture of the ladder of life, each rung being inscribed with the above-mentioned virtues.

"Exposition of the Ave Maria, at the request of certain pious women." This is merely a literal explanation of the prayer.

"Epistle to a devout woman of Bologna." This gives a few rules for taking Communion.

"Frater Hieronymus dilectis fratribus suis." This is an inquiry why nearly all his friars should be tormented by pains in the head ; he ends by attributing them to excessive meditation and recommends moderation.

Among the crowd of Savonarola's minor works, his "Expositio in Habakkuk" must not be forgotten. It is written in Latin, and has remained not only unpublished, but without examination on account of its almost undecipherable writing. It is impossible to discover the precise date at which it was composed; but it seems to have preceded the writer's excommunication. Savonarola merely used the prophet's words as a text for a discourse on Divine justice, and the development of the same arguments so frequently enlarged upon in his sermons. "The story of the Old Testament should serve," he says, "to convince us of the necessity of the coming scourge; hence it behooves us to make ready to endure it by means of prayer, good works, and the aid of Holy Writ. The prophet Habakkuk makes lamentation to the Lord on the persecutions he had borne; and we have undertaken to expound his words, that his audacity may be a lesson to us, and increase our humility. The Lord is all-perfect; but none may inquire into His judgments, save in a spirit of deep humility; hence, even the prophet Habakkuk came to confusion through his boldness. He complains of beholding the triumph of the wicked and the oppression of the just, without perceiving that all is expressly ordained in punishment of men's sins and to call believers to repentance. It has always been the case, and we now see it repeated under our eyes in the persecutions we ourselves have to bear. But if we humble ourselves before God, we shall instantly comprehend the signification of this triumph of the wicked and in what their felicity consists." At this point Savonarola breaks into terrible invectives against riches and worldly wealth, and also against the ecclesiastics who seek

"A Chapter held at St. Mark's on Holy Cross Day" (September 26th). In this he recommends fasting and abstinence.

"A short letter to a familiar friend." This consists of two pages only, deploring that Italy should have refused to listen to his words, and thus brought such heavy woes on her head.

after these things, and concludes by declaring that, even in the midst of tribulation, the good know far greater happiness than the wicked in the midst of their triumph; that accordingly they should give thanks to the Lord who draws them nearer to Him by the scourge. Although there is nothing very original in this little work, it deserves special mention, not only because it is still unpublished, but also as an example of the brief tractates in Savonarola's hand inscribed at the beginning and end of his annotated Bible in the National Library, of which I have already spoken, and which no one save myself, has hitherto examined.[1]

But at last the moment has come to speak of "The Triumph of the Cross." Savonarola gives in this book with great analytical power and by a scientific process that was entirely new at the period, a complete exposition of the Catholic faith, stripped of the scholastic that had hitherto been essential to every theological work. In his desire to bring the subject as much as possible within the comprehension of the people, this monk of the fifteenth century had the glory of inaugurating the noble school afterwards made illustrious by the names of Bossuet and Leibnitz,[2] and that subsequently fell into decay. For at a later day, the scholastic method once more prevailed, and in our country theological science remained the exclusive possession of the clergy. Then, the simpler, more scientific, and popular method introduced by the Friar four centuries before, was entirely put aside, to the serious injury, not only of religious feeling and theological inquiry, but likewise of every branch of our national culture.

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[1] The autograph of this "Expositio" is among the notes and addenda in the Bible preserved at the National Library. An old copy of it is to be found in the Marcian Library at Venice, Cod. xli. chap. ix. of the Latin MSS. We would call attention to certain words at Sheet 50 of the Marcian MS.: "Non cogitant nisi præsentia, de futuris malis aut non habent fidem firmam, *aut, tanquam præsumptuosi, putant misericordiam Dei tam magnam, ut SINE OPERIBUS salvet homines.*" The idea is throughout opposed to that constituting the foundation of Luther's doctrines. As regards the other autograph and unedited writings contained in the same Bible, see bk. i. chap. vii. of this work.

[2] We here allude to the method employed by both these authors, and also to their purpose of re-constituting the unity of the Church, but not to their theological doctrines, inasmuch as the one was Catholic and the other Protestant.

The object proposed by Savonarola in his "Triumph of the Cross" was to investigate and expound the truths of religion by means of natural reason: "Not that faith, the spontaneous gift of God, can be acquired through reason, but because reason is a useful weapon with which to combat unbelievers or open to them the way of salvation; to arouse the lukewarm and give strength to the faithful." "We will accordingly rely upon no authority, and proceed as though we could have no belief in any man in the world, whatever his wisdom, but solely in natural reason."[1] This language from the lips of a friar, and in the fifteenth century, an age when, with regard to religion and theology, men's minds were divided between total indifference and blind submission to authority, must, as we have already noted, be held as a sign of the highest courage and originality. What is still more remarkable, is that Savonarola remained unfailingly true to his flag and conducted the whole work on the same principle. "Reason," he tells us, "proceeds from the seen to the unseen; inasmuch as all our knowledge is derived from the senses, which are only cognizant of outer things; intellect, on the contrary, pierces to the substance of things, and from the knowledge of matter rises to the knowledge of the unseen and of God. Now, even as the philosophers seek God in the marvellous and visible works of nature, so we seek and find in the visible Church the invisible Church, and her supreme head, Jesus Christ."

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[1] Proem. "The Triumph of the Cross" went through numerous editions, both in the fifteenth century and at later periods. Savonarola first published it in Latin, and then speedily produced an Italian translation, or rather paraphrase, for the use of *the universality of the faithful.* We have preferred to follow the Italian edition, as being far simpler and easier in style: the scholastic formulæ occasionally used in the Latin edition are laid aside in the Italian version in order to make the work better adapted to the popular mind. "De veritate fidei in dominicæ Crucis triumphum," undated; "Libro di Frate Hieronymo da Ferrara dello ordine dei Frati predicatori; della verità della Fede Christiana; sopra el Glorioso Triompho della Croce di Christo," with a preface by Domenico Benivieni. This edition also was undated.

"The philosophers made a tabulated arrangement of all created works and beings, the better to study them as a whole and appreciate their Divine origin. In the same way, we would gather up all the visible works of Christ and His Church into a single image; so that the splendour of their divinity might be more easily apparent." This image is the same scene so often described by Savonarola in his sermons. There is a mystic chariot traversing the world in triumph. It bears Christ the conqueror, crowned with thorns, with bleeding wounds, and illumined by a celestial light from on high. His right hand grasps the Old and New Testaments, His left the Cross and the other emblems of the Passion ; at His feet lie the chalice, the Host, and all the sacramental symbols; the Virgin Mary is seated beside Him, and near her stand the urns containing the ashes of martyrs. The car is drawn by the apostles, preachers, and prophets, and followed by the multitude of the faithful and the martyrs ; while behind these, are infidels, unbelievers, and enemies of Christ, with their idols shattered, their books burnt, and their altars overthrown. Thus the car of Christ passes through the world, ever victorious, and crushing every obstacle in its path.[1] "This car," said Savonarola, "shall be as a new world, and shall endow us with a new philosophy. But as in every science, it is requisite to take certain first principles as a basis from which to start, so we, too, must admit as indisputable, certain facts, from which to proceed: Thus, for instance, that Christ was crucified, was worshipped, and hath converted the world; that Christians worship the Virgin, the Holy Trinity, the martyrs, and so on. These are facts that none of sound mind can deny; and if some Pagan writers left them unmentioned, the conversion of thousands of the heathen has served to confirm their truth." [1]

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[1] Bk. i. chap. ii.

Here the author at last enters on his main theme, and brings forward entirely rational arguments in discussing the existence and attributes of God. He considers God as the prime mover and primal cause, and then going through all the well-known arguments of the school, dwells more particularly on the following: "No natural inclination is false; therefore, since the whole human race has a natural faith and belief in the existence of a God, we are forced to infer that He truly exists, otherwise we should have to declare that one of our natural inclinations is false, the which is opposed to universal experience. In inanimate things in the animal world, and above all in mankind, we find that nothing in nature is purposeless, but that all is ordained to some end." He then treats of the Divine attributes, saying that God is incorporate and without corporeal form or any compound substance; but is one, immutable and eternal, is supreme goodness and infinite power. He then declares that the true end of man is the contemplation of things Divine, the which is only to be attained in the future life; wherefore it follows that if the soul were not immortal, man could never fulfil his true destiny.[2]

The second book of "The Triumph of the Cross" treats of those things which are beyond the grasp of reason, and yet only to be known by its aid, and by admitting, or assuming as the point of departure, the necessary and supernatural works of Christ and His Church. "By reason alone we may attain to the knowledge of God's existence; but never to that of the Trinity, save by first assuming the truth of its marvellous and supernatural operations. The knowledge of the existence of God appertains more peculiarly to the philosopher; but the knowledge of the existence of the Trinity is the main object of this work, in which, by the aid of reason, we would endeavour to soar beyond the supernatural and visible operations of the Church, to the Church invisible and to Christ Himself.[1] First of all we would say that, even as the existence of God is confirmed by the faith naturally felt in it by all men, so the existence of a true religion may be equally taken for granted; inasmuch as every man has a natural tendency to worship and do homage to his God." [2]

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[1] Bk. i. chaps. iii. and iv.

[2] Bk. i. from chap. v. to chap. xiv.

These propositions laid down, Savonarola continues: In every religion there are two forms of worship—the outward and the inward; and of these the latter is infinitely the nobler of the two, for it is manifested by righteousness of living, which is the grandest homage and truest worship that the creature can render to his Creator.[3] Wherefore we proclaim that of all religions the only true one is that which teaches us to lead a better life. And what religion can rival the Christian faith by which we are led to forsake all that is of this world, to seek after spiritual things; and that leads us to the contemplation of God Himself, the only end that can satisfy both our heart and our intellect, and the which the more it comprehends, the greater becomes its power of comprehension? In fact, no finite thing can satisfy its infinite desire; it finds no rest, save in God alone. But since God is infinite, and intellect finite, it is needful to have grace, the which, by means of virtuous living, will lead us to true bliss."[4]

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[1] Proem to bk. ii. *Vide* also bk. i. chap. v.

[2] Bk. ii. chap i.

[3] Bk. ii. chap. ii.

[4] Bk. ii. chap. iii. to chap. vii.

"Likewise, were other proofs required in favour of the Christian religion, an infinite number might be found. The Scriptures, and more particularly the prophecies, the greater part of which have already been fulfilled, would suffice to convert the most incredulous.[1] We have all seen the marvellous and supernatural effects wrought on the spirit and life of the faithful who habitually take the Sacrament; we have all seen how their inward joy and peace of mind are reflected in the light of their countenances." He then gives minute details of this spiritual beauty and inward tranquility of mind; and extols its nobleness and influence. "The mere sight of Pope Leo sufficed to curb Attila, the king of the Huns; and that of St. Benedict brought Totila to repentance. There is nothing more imposing than the aspect of a good and true Christian; nothing more sublime than his inward peace: it was thus that the martyrs were enabled to meet death joyfully in the midst of their torments."[2]

After showing the necessity of a true religion, and that Christianity is the only true one, he proceeds to examine the works of its Founder. What could Jesus Christ have been, if not the true God? How otherwise could He have overthrown all other religions and all idols, made men believe Him to be One with God; believe in the Eucharist and in the Virgin Mother—in what fame would these things be held, had they been achieved by fraud? Would it have been possible to convert almost the whole world to belief in a lie; to overturn the Empire; to give Rome into the hands of a fisherman; and to achieve all this in despite of the priests of the old faith, despite the potency of the Empire and the combined forces of nearly all the world, without weapons, without gold, without even the aid of natural reason? For how may the force of reason avail against things beyond the reach of reason?

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[1] Bk. ii. chap. viii.

[2] Bk. ii. chap. viii. to chap. xii.

The philosophers, with their endless array of logical arguments, only succeeded in creating schools with a limited number of followers; and hardly one was able to bring his precepts to bear on the realities of life. Christianity, on the contrary, spread throughout the earth, and by inculcating a doctrine intangible to reason, and holding out a reward beyond the reach of imagination, converted the world, not only to belief, but to action. No one can contemplate this work without singing a song of praise to the Lord; and without acknowledging that, by it, man has been raised to God, that Christ is our ultimate end, and that only through Him can we attain salvation.[1]

The third book is devoted to minuter details, dealing with the articles of faith, the precepts of morality, the laws and ceremonies of the Church. "But these things," says Savonarola, "have been already expounded by many Doctors, we therefore need only gather them together. And, first of all, we would note, that there is no cause for marvel, if certain dogmas of religion transcend the bounds of human reason. Is it not often seen that no man can penetrate the thoughts of another? Need we, then, wonder if the creature cannot rise to the height of the Creator?" And with this, he proceeds to enumerate the articles of our faith.

This part of the work may be passed over, for it is only a repetition of what is to be found in all Savonarola's tractates; nevertheless even this plain exposition serves to reveal his originality of mind. In speaking of the Trinity, for instance, he observes that although the unity of the three persons be a mystery, we may nevertheless find it mirrored to some degree in all nature, and that as we mount the various steps in the scale of creation, we find the symbol of the Trinity increase in perfection. In the vegetable kingdom, for example, we find the fruit of the tree only connected externally with the parent stem; while in the animal kingdom we see that the progeny lies many months in the mother's womb; and if we ascend to the generation of thought, we shall find that it is yet more intrinsic to the mind that has given it birth, almost indeed inseparable from it. Here then, we may say, is a true image of the Trinity: there is the mind that thinks, the conception it has generated, and the love that conception inspires in it: truly these are even as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. But even this is too faint an image. When man rises to the contemplation of God, then the image is far more perfect, for the mind becomes rapt and merged in the object of its contemplation. Nevertheless we are always clogged by the senses; wherefore we cannot, while here below, soar to the height that is only to be reached in the sphere above. There, contemplation will be made perfect and merged, as it were, in God, and the image of the Trinity will clearly shine forth in ourselves. And if man may soar to so great a height, how of the Lord Himself? In Him the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are truly blended into one; His substance, His being is triune and one at the same time. Thus the Trinity becomes as it were, the universal law of nature, which, by that law, tends irresistibly towards God; and the nearer it draws unto Him, the better does it represent the image of the Holy Trinity. We should therefore be convinced that, if we fail to fully comprehend this mystery, it is only because it is beyond, but not in opposition to reason."[1]

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[1] Bk. ii. chap xv.

The author then goes on to say that "the same ideas point out the way to a better understanding and exposition of the mystery of the Incarnation. The Lord was made man, not that He should be abased, but the creature raised; for although finite, the creature may hope to be raised to infinite bliss, precisely because the mystery of the Incarnation has been vouchsafed almost as a sure pledge and example. In those days men were inflamed and almost intoxicated with joy; they forsook the things of this world; became conversant with celestial things, and defied death in their cause."[1] Then, discoursing on original sin, he declares that man should not complain of bearing the penalty of Adam's guilt, inasmuch as justice was a free gift, granted to us in our first father, and lost to us through him.[2]

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[1] Bk. iii. chap. iii.

Descending still more to the concrete, he then discusses the institutions and canons of the Church, remarking that: "Even as there is an immutable law of nature among men, from which are derived all the so-called positive laws, peculiar to every people, and changing according to time and place; so there is likewise a Divine law, or rather an eternal moral law, in which, only by grace, can we fully share, and bearing not only on the actions, but on the thoughts and even on the most intimate and secret aspirations of our hearts. This is the only source from which the special laws of the Church are derived, and upon which all her canons and constitutions should be founded; even as positive, must be founded upon natural right. These two primary rights of our nature, namely, moral and natural right, are reciprocally related to each other; but the first alone is a complete and universal law bearing on the whole life of man; the second bears on external actions only, for it cannot penetrate to the inner spirits wherein is the true seat of good and evil. Hence natural laws might be considered as a lesser part of the moral law, with which it neither may nor can be brought into opposition. "For the which reason, we despise no good works nor rational laws, albeit they proceed from the people, from philosophers, or from Pagan emperors; but glean everything that is good and true from all doctrines and all books, assured that all truth and goodness proceed from God, and are especially created for the use of His elect." [1]

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[1] Bk. iii. chap. vii.

[2] Bk. iii. chap. ix.

Savonarola concludes by speaking of the Sacraments, styling them the secondary causes of spiritual salvation, of which Jesus Christ is the primary cause. The Sacraments, he says, may be truly regarded as the instruments used by the Lord for the bestowal and increase of His grace ; as visible signs marvellously representing the invisible object for which they are decreed. It is needless to give any detailed explanation of his doctrine of the Sacraments, as it is in complete accordance with that of the Doctors of the Church ; and it would be equally superfluous to repeat his minute description of the Sacraments, and the strange allegories they suggest to his mind. He considers them to be all complementary, as it were, to the sacrament of the Eucharist, and forming in their entirety a marvellous world of spiritual harmony and loveliness.[2]

Thus, after having proved the existence of God, and the necessity of a religion ; and shown the excellence of the Christian faith in its every part, Savonarola devotes the fourth and concluding book to confuting all other doctrines and creeds, and proving their fallacy when compared with the Christian faith. He begins with the philosophers, and exposes the strange variety of their opinions upon all the more important problems of life, showing how it naturally follows that whoever forsakes religion, instantly falls into a bottomless and measureless abyss, from which there is no escape.[3] Continuing in this strain, he next assails judicial astrology, against which he had, as we know, already produced a short tractate; combats various idolatrous sects, and confutes the Jewish faith on the evidence of the Bible. He then attacks heretics or schismatics, and deals his heaviest blows at the Mahometans.[1] And this gives him an opportunity for a concluding definition and defence of the Church militant. "This Church is one, under one head, in the likeness and as the image of the Church triumphant in heaven under the rule of Jesus Christ." At this point Savonarola quotes all the passages of Scripture in which the unity of the Church and the authority of the Pope are most plainly inculcated. According to St. John there must be only one fold and one shepherd; yet although Christ in heaven is the true and sole head of the Church, He hath left St. Peter as His representative upon earth, saying: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock (*pietra*) I will build My Church, and I will give unto thee the keys of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Nor can these words apply to Peter alone, for inasmuch as God hath promised that the Church shall endure to the end of the world, so they must be held to apply to Peter and the successors of Peter. Wherefore it is manifest that all the faithful should be united under the Pope, as the supreme head of the Roman Church, the mother of all other churches; *and that whoever departs from the unity and doctrines of the Roman Church, unquestionably departs from Christ.*"[2]

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[1] Bk. iii. chap. xiii.

[2] Bk. iii. chaps. xiv. to xvi. *Vide* also bk. i. chap. x.

[3] Bk. iv., Proem, chaps. i. and ii.

So ended a work that, while written as an exposition and defence of Catholicism also served as an ample and noble apology for its author. Not even Pope Alexander himself could have exacted a more explicit profession of faith, or a more absolute submission to Papal authority. In fact, Savonarola's attacks were never directed in the slightest degree against the dogmas of the Roman Church, but solely against those who corrupted them. He had an enthusiastic respect and reverence for religion; but fiercely combated the papal and clerical abominations by which its safety was imperilled, and steadily refused to bend to threats or oppression. Numerous editions of "The Triumph of the Cross" appeared both in Italian and Latin; and it was even reprinted by the Office of the Propaganda Fide,[1] whose publications are intended for missionary use; while by expert theologians it has always been estimated as one of the best of religious tractates as regards its matter, and of the most original in its manner of exposition,[2] it can scarcely, however, be said to give a complete idea of Savonarola's mind, since he always rose to his greatest height in the heat of combat, and only showed in the pulpit the full extent of his powers. Nevertheless, the finer qualities of his intellect are all displayed in this work, and we are enabled to appreciate the extent of his learning, embracing nearly the whole philosophic and religious knowledge of his time; for in this work scholastic and mystic theology, Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic philosophy are all handled with equal mastery, and without any of the extravagances by which they were afterwards debased.

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[1] Bk. iv. chaps. iv. and v.

[2] Bk. iv. chap. vi. We have here quoted nearly verbatim from the author's text, but his words are still more prolix, and accordingly even still more explicit.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in fact, these elements of knowledge were disunited; and each becoming dominant in its turn easily transgressed its due limits. Thus, the Aristotelians inclined to materialism; the Platonists to pantheism and frequent flights into the wildest and most arbitrary allegories; while the mystics paved the way for the Reformation, by breaking up the religious unity, that it was the supreme desire of Savonarola to maintain. In his writings all these diverse creeds were fused in one synthesis and show the need felt in that age for a general transformation of thought. The Friar's early training in Aristotelian philosophy aided him to expound theology; and the Neo-Platonic doctrines gave a certain scientific basis to the mystic beliefs which were so satisfactory to his ardent soul. These stores of learning fed the fiery zeal of a religious spirit, whose days were spent in the contemplation of heavenly things and in fervent admiration of the Holy Fathers and Holy Writ. He sought a faith in accord with reason, a religion in accord with liberty; a Church that should never be hostile to the nation, nor opposed to the voice of conscience and virtue, the true keystones, as he deemed, of the Church and the State. These various and manifold doctrines gave wings to his free and original mind, that instinctively flew towards the truth and, ever soaring to lofty planes of thought, unconsciously expressed the general needs of the political, philosophic, and religious life of an entire epoch. The component elements of this almost superhuman inspiration and universal grasp of thought were afterwards scattered and the progress of mankind could only be carried on in separate grooves. Therefore any one who, dominated by exclusive or preconceived ideas and consequently incapable of fully appreciating Savonarola's mind and spirit, should consider only one side of his character, would gain a very incomplete notion of the nature of his ideas or value of his deeds; and would limit to a short period, the influence of the man who agitated and stirred an entire century, by acting as the representative of all its loftiest and most noble aspirations,

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[1] It was printed without any date, and together with his "Meditazione sul Miserere." There is one copy of it in the Guicciardini Collection.

[2] It was highly praised even by Père Lacordaire.

CHAPTER V.

SAVONAROLA RESUMES HIS SERMONS ON SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY. A SECOND "BURNING OF THE VANITIES." MORE PAPAL BRIEFS. CONTINUATION OF HIS SERMONS.

(1497–1498.)

THE year 1497 was now coming to a close, and the Republic much wearied by the slow progress of its negotiations with the Pope. A second ambassador, Messer Domenico Bonsi, was sent to Rome to assist Bracci in pleading Savonarola's cause, seek permission to impose a tithe on ecclesiastical property, and try to obtain the fulfilment of the Pope's promise of restoring Pisa to the Florentines. But all was in vain. The Holy Father refused to settle any other question, until that of the Friar was decided ; but he now insisted that Savonarola should be delivered into his hands, and to this the Republic was neither able nor willing to accede. If the magistrates were weary of all this empty manœuvring, Savonarola was still wearier and more impatient of it, and his long silence was now becoming unbearable to him. For more than six months he had remained shut up in his cell, solely occupied in expounding his doctrines by the pen, and defending them against attacks from all quarters. He had proved the excommunication to be invalid, shown that a sound Catholic could withstand the unjust commands of an ill-wildest and most arbitrary allegories; while the mystics paved the way for the Reformation, by breaking up the religious unity, that it was the supreme desire of Savonarola to maintain. In his writings all these diverse creeds were fused in one synthesis and show the need felt in that age for a general transformation of thought. The Friar's early training in Aristotelian philosophy aided him to expound theology; and the Neo-Platonic doctrines gave a certain scientific basis to the mystic beliefs which were so satisfactory to his ardent soul. These stores of learning fed the fiery zeal of a religious spirit, whose days were spent in the contemplation of heavenly things and in fervent admiration of the Holy Fathers and Holy Writ. He sought a faith in accord with reason, a religion in accord with liberty; a Church that should never be hostile to the nation, nor opposed to the voice of conscience and virtue, the true keystones, as he deemed, of the Church and the State. These various and manifold doctrines gave wings to his free and original mind, that instinctively flew towards the truth and, ever soaring to lofty planes of thought, unconsciously expressed the general needs of the political, philosophic, and religious life of an entire epoch. The component elements of this almost superhuman inspiration and universal grasp of thought were afterwards scattered and the progress of mankind could only be carried on in separate grooves. Therefore any one who, dominated by exclusive or preconceived ideas and consequently incapable of fully appreciating Savonarola's mind and spirit, should consider only one side of his character, would gain a very incomplete notion of the nature of his ideas or value of his deeds; and would limit to a short period, the influence of the man who agitated and stirred an entire century, by acting as the representative of all its loftiest and most noble aspirations.

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The quarrel with Rome was now very widely discussed. Numerous publications appeared in defence of Savonarola's orthodoxy, and even more to declare the excommunication invalid. Most of these pamphlets were mere repetitions of things already said by Savonarola himself in his different sermons and epistles. But G. F. Pico della Mirandola brought out an "Apology," dedicated to Duke Ercole of Este, in which he treated the question, if not with any striking originality, at all events with much learning, and after careful study of the Fathers and papal decrees in general.[1] He begins by proclaiming his constant and entire submission to the dogmas of the Church. For the Church, he says, is under the care of Jesus Christ; and hence can neither be in error as regards the substance of faith, nor in all needful rules for the godly life by which we attain to salvation.[1] On other points, however, the Church is not infallible. And if this may be said of the universal Church, how much more may not be affirmed of Popes and of Councils, who according to the Doctors and Fathers, have frequently lapsed into error? No sentence of excommunication that has been justly appealed against, or that contains manifest errors of fact, and particularly if based on such errors, can be held valid or worthy of obedience. The apostle enjoins obedience to our superiors; but he also adds that we must render obedience to God rather than to men. (Romans xiii. 1; Acts v. 29). For our superiors may be urged by their own malice or by false suggestions from others.[2] We are bound, it is true, to submit even to an unjust sentence, but only in cases where refusal to obey might give birth to scandal. And when excommunication commands things contrary to faith and morality, no one will consider that we are bound to submission. Undoubtedly, no true shepherd would ever issue any such command; but there might be a wolf in the guise of a shepherd. Excommunication derives its force from justice, and without justice can take no effect.[3] Wherefore, according to the Doctors, many excommunications have been invalid.

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[1] "Apologia R. P. F. Hieronymi Savonarolæ," per G. F. Picum de Mirandula Comitem ad Herculem Estensem I. Ferrarriæ et Mutinæ Ducem. Libri duo. This is the first of Quétif's "Additiones" to Pico's Life of Savonarola. Paris, 1674.

In the Proem, addressed to Ercole I., Pico states that he wrote the work in consequence of a conversation he had held with the Duke, and almost in fulfilment of a promise made at that time. But the Duke, notwithstanding the warm admiration he had hitherto shown for Savonarola, and the great encouragement he had afforded him, now took alarm, and tried to deprecate the wrath of the Pope by sending him a letter dated the 26th of March, 1498, that does little honour to the writer. For he absolutely denies having spoken to Pico on the matter, or made any request of him. On the contrary, he shows great indignation against the author of the "Apologia," and charges him with falsehood (*in hoc aut finxisse aut mentitum esse*), and professes his submission to the Papal authority, of which, he declares, he has never had any doubt (*cum de Summi Pontificis auctoritate ac potestate nunquam dubitaverim*). Cappelli, Girolamo Savonarola ec, doc. cxlvi. p. 104. The Duke's conduct resembles that of many other of the Friar's adherents, and is an additional proof, that no genuine religious movement was possible in Italy at a time when there was an almost total absence of any earnest religious spirit.

Pico then proceeds to say that false doctrine is one of the charges brought against Savonarola in the Papal decree; but that this charge could only have been alleged through enmity or error,[1] since it is known to all that Savonarola only teaches the word of Christ[2] The Pope was moved to this by perfidious men in their wrath against one who was innocent; and he gave them credence without first putting their statements to the test. Wherefore his sentence can have no force, inasmuch as it ordains impossible and injurious things. The union of St. Mark's with the new Congregation does not depend in fact on Savonarola's consent alone; but on that of all his brethren, against whom no excommunication has been launched. This union would be no reformation, but rather a malformation, since the good would be forcibly joined to the corrupt. Hence it is plain that Savonarola has no need of absolution, and that none need refrain from intercourse with him.[3] And this can be proved by the logic of reason, since it is needless to loosen that which is unbound. Rather should all men be convinced that the sentence of excommunication affords the best proof of his innocence.[4]

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[1] " . . . , de fidei substantia et moribus ad salutem consequendam necessariis" (at page 8).

[2] " . . . . vel malitia propria, vel falsis suggestionibus moti" (at page 22).

[3] "Porro excommunicationis sententia vires ex iustitia sumit, qua destituta, languet et moritur" (at page 25).

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[1] " . . . . malo zelo et ignoratione caussæ" (at page 31).

[2] " . . . . nihil docet præter Christi verba" (at page 32).

[3] " . . . nullam ei necessarium absolutionem fore, nec ab illius communione ullo pacto abstinendum esse" (at page 38).

[4] "Hi profecto in propriæ conscientiæ luce viderunt, nullo eum spirituali laqueo irretitum, quod . . . ex ipsa etiam causa, ob quam excommunicatio est publicata, plane confirmatum est" (at page 40).

Professor Ranke dwells upon Pico's "Apologia" in his before-quoted work on Savonarola (pp. 289–291), and declares it to be of great value as a clear definition of the attitude of Savonarola and his disciples towards the Pope. That he resumed his sermons after the sentence of excommunication, and that he was allowed so to do, are, he says, very important facts. It was not only an act of disobedience, but one hostile to the whole system of the Church, and calculated to throw doubt upon it. To draw a distinction between the universal Church and the papal power was contrary to the recognized practice of the time, was a step towards transforming the constitution of the Church itself. Such, continues Ranke, was the position assumed by Savonarola, who thus paved the way for Reform. "Der Excommunication zu widerstehen war eine Anbahnung des allgemeine Reform mit der er umging" (p. 291). That

In fact, as we have already seen, even the Pope shrank from impugning the orthodoxy of Savonarola's doctrine, and the cardinals, after careful examination, pronounced it to be without a flaw. But what availed all these discussions? It was more and more evident that the Borgia's feud with the Friar was of a political and personal character, was becoming more and more scandalous, leading to a daily increase of immorality in Florence, and endangering the safety of the Republic. Reason and discussion had absolutely failed, and farther delay would be dangerous.

Accordingly on Christmas Day Savonarola put an end to all suspense by thrice performing high mass, and giving the communion to all his monks and to a vast concourse of laity. He then led his brethren in solemn procession round the square of St. Mark. In the meantime many of his friends who, by permission of the Signory, had already furnished the Duomo with the usual platforms and benches, came to implore him to preach to them again. Little persuasion was needed, and he promised to remount the pulpit on the following Sunday (Septuagesima, 11th of February, 1498). This was opposed by Messer Lionardo de' Medici, vicar to the archbishop, who not only sternly prohibited every ecclesiastic from attending the sermon, but ordered the parish priests to impress their flocks with the importance and validity of the excommunication, and

Savonarola desired a real reformation of the Church is as certain as that he combated Alexander VI. and even sought to procure his deposition. But it is no less certain that he left dogma unassailed, and always recognized the authority of the Pontiff to be indispensable to the unity of the Church; and these declarations are likewise repeated by Pico. This constituted the difference between the reformation Savonarola sought to promote and that founded by Luther. Besides, as Ranke himself allows, the character and deeds of the German Reformer were altogether different from those of the Prior of St. Mark's. Nor can we believe that it was then an unheard-of thing to distinguish between the Church universal and the Papal power, although the Popes naturally tried to stamp out the idea.

threaten them with exclusion from the confessional, the Lord's Table, and even from burial in consecrated ground, as the penalty of hearing Savonarola preach. But the Signory soon put a stop to this by intimating to the vicar that if he continued these menaces he would be proclaimed a rebel.[1] All hindrances being thus removed, the first sermon was given on the appointed day, and, thanks to the novelty of the case and the Friar's daring, the cathedral was even more crowded than usual.

The excommunication, the authority of the Pope, and the right of every honest conscience to resist unjust commands, were naturally the chief themes of these new discourses. "O Lord, thou hast cast me into a flood from which I have neither the power nor the will to escape. But I beseech Thee to let no word pass my lips that may be opposed to the Holy Scriptures or to the Church. Let us now consider the decree of excommunication. Know then that God ruleth the world through secondary causes, and the righteous prince or the good priest is merely an instrument in the Lord's hands for the government of the people. But when the Higher Agency is withdrawn from prince or priest he is no longer an instrument, but *a broken tool.* And how, thou wouldst say, am I to discern whether or no the Higher Agency be absent? See if his laws and commands be contrary to that which is the root and principle of all wisdom, namely of godly living and charity; and if contrary, thou mayest be truly assured that he is *a broken tool*, and that thou art nowise bound to obey him. Now tell me a little, what is the aim of those who by their lying reports have procured this sentence of excommunication? As all know, they sought to sweep away virtuous living and righteous government, and to open the door to every vice. Thus, no sooner was the excommunication pronounced, than they returned to drunkenness, profligacy, and every other crime, and righteous living has been struck down. Wherefore I tell thee that, if I be accursed on earth, I am blessed in heaven.

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[1] Nardi, vol. i. p. 136, actually says that the Signory ordered him to resign his post at two hours' notice, and we find this repeated in two letters addressed to Duke Ludovico, one of which is dated from Florence, 13th of February, 1498; and the other from Rome, 21st of February, 1498. *Vide* Appendix to Italian Edition, doc. xii. But there is reason to believe that this was only a threat.

"Man's perfection consisteth not only in faith and in law, but in charity, and only he that hath charity knoweth that which is needed for salvation.[1] Nowadays we have nothing but laws and canons and controversies; but the apostles had fewer laws, because they were inflamed with love and charity. All theology, all canonical and civil laws, all ecclesiastical ceremonies are ordained with a view to charity, and all the world hath been made for charity by God. Therefore on him that giveth commands opposed to charity, which is the plenitude of our law, *anathema sit*. Were such command pronounced by an angel, even by the Virgin Mary herself, and all the saints (the which is certainly impossible), *anathema sit*. If pronounced by any law, or canon, or council, *anathema sit*. And if any Pope hath ever spoken to a contrary effect from this, let him be declared excommunicate. I say not that such Pope hath ever existed; but if he hath existed he can have been no instrument of the Lord, but *a broken tool*.

"It is feared by some that, although this excommunication be powerless in Heaven, it may have power in the Church. For me it is enough not to be interdicted by Christ. O my Lord, if I should seek to be absolved from this excommunication, let me be sent to hell; I should shrink from seeking absolution as from mortal sin. O Father, there be even some friars who speak of this excommunication, saying that it is valid, and that none may absolve us from it. Would ye that I teach ye the way? Ah! it were better to keep silence. Nevertheless this much will I say: do thus." And here Savonarola struck two keys together to signify by their chinking that the clergy of his time were ready to do anything for money. "O Father!" he then went on, "Thou didst bid us to let the excommunication come, to bear it aloft at the spear's point, and that Thou wouldst open the way for us.[1] I reply that all hath not yet come to pass, wherefore thou hast not yet seen all things. But thou hast seen how some one in Rome lost a son,[2] how a certain man hath come to his death here, and will certainly be cast into hell, and ye will see how they will be judged.[3] As yet no miracle hath been forced from me; but when the time cometh the Lord will stretch forth His hand; and already so many signs have been shown to thee, that there is no longer any need of miracles.[4] What could be more miraculous than the spread of these doctrines, despite so many obstacles? Citizens, women, ye must risk your lives for this truth. I turn to Thee, O Lord, that didst suffer death for the truth, and I beseech Thee to let me only die in its defence, for the salvation of Thy chosen servants and of this people."[5]

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[1] It should be noted how, in placing charity above faith and law, Savonarola is in contradiction with the fundamental doctrine of the Reformation: *justification by faith alone*.

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[1] Here allusion is made to another sermon from which I have already quoted, and in which Savonarola gave his hearers to understand that if he were sentenced to excommunication he would *give a turn to the key*. But, as we have seen, no real bull of excommunication had ever been launched, nor did the circular letter to the different monastic orders in Florence bring any definite charge against Savonarola's doctrines.

[2] The assassination of the Duke of Gandia, the son of Alexander VI.

[3] This is perhaps an allusion to the death of Bernardo del Nero and his accomplices, of whose guilt Savonarola was undoubtedly convinced, although he did nothing to procure their condemnation.

[4] Savonarola did not intend to say that he would perform a real miracle, but believed that, were it essential for the salvation of the Church, the Lord would perform through him some supernatural deed for its sake, and of this he was apparently fully convinced.

[5] "Prediche xxii., sopra l'Esodo e sopra alcuni Salmi," delivered in Sta.

On the 15th of the same month the Friar gave a lecture in St. Mark's on the office and attributes of the priesthood, in which he denounced the vices of the clergy with terrific force. "When I reflect on the life led by priests I am constrained to weep. O my brethren and my children, shed tears for these woes of the Church, so that the Lord may call the priests to repentance, for it is plain that terrible chastisement awaits them. The tonsure is the seat of all iniquity. It begins in Rome, where the clergy make mock of Christ and the saints; are worse than Turks, worse than Moors. Not only do they refuse to suffer for the Lord's sake, but even traffic with the sacraments. At this day there is a trade in benefices, which are sold to the highest bidder! Think ye that Jesus Christ will any longer permit this? Woe, woe to Italy and to Rome! Come, come, O priests! come, my brethren; let us do our best to revive a little the love of God! O Father, we shall be cast into prison, we shall be persecuted and done to death. So let it be! They may kill me as they please, but they will never tear Christ from my heart. I am ready to die for my God.

"Thou hast been in Rome, and dost know the life of these priests. Tell me, wouldst thou hold them to be pillars of the Church, or temporal lords? Have they not courtiers and grooms, and horses and dogs; are not their mansions full of tapestries and silks, of perfumes and lackeys? Seemeth it to thee that this is the Church of God? Their vainglory filleth the world, and their avarice is equally vast. They do all things for gold, and they ring their bells because of their greed, and only demand bread and candles and coin. They attend Vespers and Offices in the choir, forasmuch at these services there is

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Maria del Fiore (the Duomo), and beginning on Septuagesima Sunday, the 11th of February, 1498; collected by M. Lorenzo Violi. Florence, 1498. *Vide* Sermon No. i.

somewhat to be gained; but they go not to Matins, for there no money is distributed. They sell benefices, sell the sacraments, sell marriage services, sell all things. And yet they stand in dread of excommunication! They will not give the holy wafer to those who attend my sermons; and they forget that they have accompanied the dead together with my friars of St. Mark's. Whenever there is profit to be made they disregard my excommunication, but when it suits their purpose they declare it to be valid. O Lord, Lord, smite them with Thy glaive!" [1]

Savonarola gave two more sermons before the close of the Carnival. In the second, delivered on Sexagesima Sunday (18th of February), he spoke of the Pope and the papal authority in the following words: "I take it for granted there be no man who is not liable to error. Thou art mad to say that a Pope cannot err, when there have been so many wicked Popes who have erred! . . . If it were true that no Pope could ever err, ought we then to do even as they do in order to gain salvation? Thou wouldst reply, that a Pope may err as a man, but not as a Pope; but I tell thee that the Pope may err, even in his judgments and sentences.[2] Go! read how many decrees have been made by one Pope and revoked by the next; and how many opinions held by some Popes are contradicted by those of other Pontiffs." He then went on to declare that the errors of a Pope may proceed from ill-will, or be based upon false information; and thereupon he gave the history of all the briefs launched against himself, and their contradictory tenour. But as all this has been minutely narrated elsewhere, there is no need to repeat it.

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[1] "Sermone fatto a molti sacerdoti, religiosi e secolari in San Marco, a di' 15 Febbraio, 1497" (Florentine style). It is also to be found in the collection of "Sermons on Exodus." ("Sermoni sopra Esodo.")

[2] It should be noted that this does not refer to dogma.

"But why do they rage against me in Rome? Thinkest thou 'tis for the sake of religion? By no means. They seek to overthrow our government, they seek to tyrannize over us, and care not if righteous living be destroyed, the which is born of our doctrine, and will die with it. Wherefore he that combateth this doctrine combateth evangelic charity, and is truly a heretic. But nowadays the preachers are hirelings of great potentates, and are sorely afraid to speak the truth, or oppose those that are above them. It was not thus in the times when priests were inspired by the true Christian spirit; in those days St. Paul reproved St. Peter before all, *quia reprehensibilis erat*."

"These, then, are the reasons which have prevented me from writing to Rome to say that I had erred. And to ye, who always quote canons and chapters, I make reply that there be many that allege these things without knowing what they want. These canons of yours, ye turn them and twist them after your own fashion; make this lawful and that unlawful as it seemeth best to ye, even to the extent of trafficking in the cure of souls. I know well there be some that openly counsel this traffic, but I will not enter into that question now; some day, peradventure, I may have the courage to prove to ye that it is pure heresy." [1]

On Quinquagesima Sunday Savonarola preached for the last time during Carnival, treating the same subject and using the same arguments. "Laws are made for a good end, and should therefore be in agreement with reason and charity. Come forward, thou priest or friar, whom I have taken by the arm, and I will prove to thee that thou art like unto a painted image—with nought that is good within. If the end of the law be goodness, the quality of the law is made known by its fruit; where good works are, there is good law; where bad works are, there good law is not. Say, O Father! if all the world were against thee, what wouldst thou do? I would stand firm, for my doctrine is the doctrine of godly living, and therefore it proceedeth from God. This excommunication is hostile to godly living, and therefore proceedeth from the devil. Yet, Father, it is declared by the canonical law that even when excommunication be unjust and full of hidden errors it should nevertheless be respected for the avoidance of scandals. This is true so far, that if thou art excommunicated for a sin of which thou art innocent, but of which the people believeth thee guilty, thou must then submit in order to avoid scandal. But when thine innocence is patent to the eyes of all the world, as in our own case, what scandal hast thou to fear then? Moreover, I tell thee that if excommunicated in such wise, that to observe its decrees thou must needs act in opposition to charity, it then becomes thy duty to disregard it. Wert thou prohibited, under pain of excommunication, *latæ sententiæ*, from giving aid to one in extreme necessity, I must tell thee that, in such case, no excommunication should be held valid. Thinkest thou that laws be made for evil? Were unjust sentences to be held valid, a wicked Pope might destroy the whole Church, and it would behoove us to submit. For myself, I tell thee that these excommunications are now cheap commodities; and any one, for the sum of four *lire*, can excommunicate whomsoever he pleaseth; hence they are worth nothing."

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[1] "Prediche sopra l'Esodo." *Vide* the sermon given on Sexagesima Sunday.

As we see, the rupture had now become most decided. Convinced that charity was the supreme law of the Christian life; that no misconception was possible on this point; that no authority could prevail against it, Savonarola was resolved to despise the decree of excommunication and defy the Pope. The latter's mode of life, the scandals and abominations perpetrated by himself, his children, and his courtiers in Rome, had convinced the Friar that resistance was a duty, and that God would come to his aid in the final struggle.[1] He therefore concluded this sermon by announcing that he should celebrate Mass on the last day of Carnival, and solemnly give his blessing to the people in the convent square. At the moment of the elevation of the Host he said, "I bid ye all pray fervently to the Lord, that if this work be not inspired by Him, He will send down His fires to bear me to hell.[2] Offer up the like prayer throughout these days; note it down and proclaim it to all." This was the blind and superstitious belief that Savonarola could never shake off, and that constantly threatened him with ruin. He felt firmly convinced that the Lord would perform some great miracle to prove the truth of his doctrine in the hour of need, and he reiterated his conviction with a mistimed simplicity that naturally tempted his enemies to take him at his word. His manner of solemnizing the last day of Carnival was certainly of the strangest. At the conclusion of High Mass he administered the sacrament to a vast crowd of people, and then ascended a wooden pulpit that had been erected for the occasion before the great door of the church. Here he offered a few prayers, while the monks sang Psalms and afterwards addressed the throng of people in the square, reminding them of the appeal he had begged them to make to the Almighty. Then, raising the Host on high, he blessed the kneeling crowd of excited worshippers and murmured the following invocation : "O Lord, if my deeds be not sincere, if my words be not inspired by Thee, strike me dead on the instant." His countenance expressed the most extraordinary excitement, and it was plain that deepest faith dictated his words.

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[1] It is impossible to doubt that the shameless immorality of the Pope was the chief cause of Savonarola's wrath and irritation. On the 1st of February, 1498, the Ferrarese orator wrote to the Duke that Savonarola had told him that he would take no orders from the Pope as regarded preaching or not preaching, "while he saw him continue his present mode of life" (Cappelli, op. cit., p. 102, doc. 142).

[2] "Prediche sopra l'Esodo." *Vide* the sermon delivered on Quinquagesima Sunday.

After the midday meal, the people again traversed the streets in procession, to collect contributions for a second Burning of the Vanities. But this time the Piagnoni had to endure much insult and injury from the Compagnacci, who stripped some of their cloaks, knocked the red crosses out of the hands of others, struck them with sticks, and pelted them with stones. Nevertheless the procession managed to reach the Piazza of the Signoria, where a pile of vanities had been stacked, of even greater value, according to Burlamacchi, than that of the previous year. It was crowned by a figure of Lucifer surrounded by the seven cardinal sins. The people gathered round the pile, chanting a *Te Deum*; and it was then fired and burnt to ashes amid shouts of frantic exultation. The procession afterwards repaired to the cathedral square, and halted there to consign all the money that had been collected to the *Buoni Uomini di S. Martino*, "St. Martin's Good Men." It then proceeded to St. Mark's, and a crucifix being set up in the middle of the square, friars and laymen joined hands in three rings and danced round it, singing psalms and devotional hymns.[1]

Thus ended the Carnival season of 1498, in which party passion had again come to life, and that was a time of such general excitement and expectation of strange events. Savonarola's new sermons, whether from the intrinsic force of his arguments, or from the singular daring with which he defied the Pope and inveighed against scandals abhorred by all, were undoubtedly received with new and increasing favour. They were printed separately as soon as delivered, and diffused throughout Italy and other countries. "Even from Germany," as Savonarola said, "letters reach us from new followers converted by our doctrines."[1] On all sides men were beginning to murmur against the Court of Rome, and, as may well be conceived, the Borgia's fury was proportionately increased. In one of the many letters written on the subject at the time, we find it said that "the news of his (the Friar's) preaching has again reached Rome, and excited great noise there. I doubt me there will be a sharper war, and that it will soon be carried on at close quarters: our ambassador there is beginning to feel alarmed."[2] Letters came daily from the orators in Rome, and Messer Domenico Bonsi wrote, saying: "I am assailed by a multitude of cardinals and prelates, who come to express severe blame regarding your Excellencies' conduct, and speak of the Pope's exceeding wrath. You have numerous foes here, who will all do their best to blow on the fire."[3] At the Roman Court nothing was talked of save the audacity of this Friar, who refused to acknowledge any authority as superior to that of God and

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[1] Burlamacchi, p. 115 and fol.; Nardi, vol. i. p. 140. Again, as in speaking of the first bonfire, Nardi, the translator of Livy, and a lover of antiquity, merely records that "many dishonest, indecent, and vain things were consumed." He adds that, in this way, days formerly dedicated to worldly pleasures were now devoted to the honour and glory of Christ. But, what is still more remarkable, Somenzi, although decidedly hostile to Savonarola, wrote to the Duke from Florence that the pile consisted "of a great quantity of lustful things, *videlicet* mirrors, women's false

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hair, playing cards and tables, dice, lutes, masks, paintings, quantities of perfumes, and every species of lustful things; the which were valued at a considerable sum." *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xii. Is it likely that if really valuable objects of art had been included in the collection, the learned Nardi and Somenzi, the bitter enemy of Savonarola, would have both failed to mention the fact?

[1] In the sermon on Quinquagesima Sunday.

[2] A letter from Strozzi to the parish priest of Cascina. *Vide* Perrens, doc. xv.

[3] Despatches to the Ten, dated 17th of February, 1498, and on the following days. *Vide* Padre Marchese, "Documenti," &c., op. cit., p. 164 and fol.

his own conscience; who stigmatized Pope Alexander as a *broken tool*, and dared to declare that all believers in the validity of the excommunication were heretics! With all this outcry sounding in his ears, the Pope's rage was so much inflamed, that it threatened to burst into a blaze at any moment. And among the more assiduous in fomenting his anger was Frà Mariano da Genazzano, who had sworn to take revenge, and saw that the moment for it was approaching. Indeed, so tremendous were the charges alleged by this man against Savonarola's doctrines, that he was at last commissioned to refute them publicly in the pulpit.

On the first Sunday in Lent the Church of the Augustine friars in Rome was unusually crowded; many eminent cardinals and prelates were seated before the high altar, and all had come to listen to Frà Mariano's sermon. Nevertheless the result by no means justified his repute as a great theologian and preacher. He started by treating of the authority of the Pontiff, and how the Holy Spirit descended upon him, as it had upon the apostles; but instead of at once proceeding to define and confute Savonarola's arguments, he gave free vent to his rage in loud bursts of vehement and almost indecent language: "This is the true light, not that of the Ferrarese monk, who preaches by the light of the devil, and dares to say that Pope Alexander is a broken tool. He is a vile Jew, a ribald and thief, who has stolen money and has hidden treasures! O Pope! O cardinals! how do you tolerate this monster, this hydra? Has the authority of the Church come to such a pass that a drunkard of this sort may trample it so ignominiously under his feet? O College! O Pontiff! take heed; you know not what that man is devising; he will say things to darken the sun. But you take no heed, so that all may now snap their fingers in your face, and, but for my reverence, I too might do the same." Then in spite of this declaration of respect, he turned to the cardinals and made the vilest gesture, shouting the while like a madman. His hearers were highly disgusted with his coarseness of speech, and the cardinals, who had come prepared to listen to a logical refutation, could not refrain from continually shaking their heads in disapproval. Accordingly, Frà Mariano was discomfited afresh, but nevertheless remained firm to his purpose.[1]

Meanwhile Savonarola, in his untiring energy, had produced a new "Tractate on the rule and government of the city of Florence."[2] He had been urged to compose this work by the past Signory, and, as he records in its preface, had willingly accepted the invitation, "because, although he had preached on the truth of faith, the simplicity of the Christian life, on things to come, and on good government, he had never yet written a special treatise on the last of those themes.[3] He was now moved to write it, in the idea that it would be useful to his flock, and also to fulfil the duties of his office by giving another proof that he preached sound doctrine, in no way contrary to the Church." In the first part of this little work he states that man, being a free agent, needs to be governed, and is best governed by an absolute ruler when that ruler is a righteous man. Then, following the dictates, not only of reason, but of experience, he adds: "Government of this kind is not, however, suited to every people; on the contrary, the mutable, restless, ambitious character of the Florentines demands a civil government, or rather a Republic." The second part treats of government under a single ruler, in cases where the ruler is bad, or, in other words, of a despotic government. And here Savonarola describes tyrants and the evils of tyranny with perhaps greater eloquence than in his sermons, and certainly with more correctness and polish of style. The third and last part treats of free government by means of a Greater Council, the which, by reserving the right of appointment to all offices of the State, becomes a safeguard against popular anarchy and the tyranny of the few. The author concludes by describing the miseries of despots, and the happiness to be won both on earth and in heaven by those who govern by freedom. Nevertheless he always confines himself to generalities, with the intention of composing, at some less turbulent time, a more important and elaborate Latin treatise on the same theme. Now, in the midst of so many agitations, he wrote only for the people, and in fact this is the most popular and best known of all his works, owing to the vigorous simplicity and eloquence of its style.

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[1] All this is minutely related in a letter, of which we possess an old copy, without date or signature: "Copia d'una lettera venuta da Roma della predicha di M. Mariano da San Ghallo, chontro a Frà Giròlamo." Codex of the Magliabecchian Library, cl. xxxiv. 288. Frà Mariano's monastery was situated at San Gallo. *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xiii.

[2] "Trattato circa il reggimento e governo della città di Firenze." This was printed without a date, during the author's life. See, too, the edition produced by Audins de Rians (Florence, 1848), who believed it to have been written in 1493, because the Gonfalonier Salviati, who urged Savonarola to compose it, was in office in '93, and again in January and February, '98. But a glance at the tractate is enough to show that it continually refers to facts long posterior to the year '93. It was probably written at the beginning of 1498.

[3] The other tractates to which he refers here were chiefly "Il Trionfo della Croce"; "Della semplicità della vita cristiana"; and "De veritate prophetica."

After this, Savonarola undauntedly returned to the pulpit, and, dating from the beginning of Lent, continued to preach regularly. He spoke in terms of rejoicing of the devout celebration of Carnival, condemned the insulting attacks of the Compagnacci, discoursed on righteous living, and then recurred to what now formed almost the sole theme of his sermons. "O Rome! what is it that I ask of thee? A bull to enforce righteous living—this is all that I would ask of thee; but here, on the contrary, men only demand bulls for the destruction of morality."[1] He was careful at this time to preserve a moderate tone, in the hope of continuing to preach without exciting fresh opposition; but the Pope, no longer able to restrain his fury, threatened to interdict Florence, and compel every Christian State, under pain of excommunication, to confiscate the property of all Florentine merchants. Nevertheless, the more sagacious of the cardinals contrived to calm his wrath to some extent[2] by pointing out to him that his conflict with Savonarola was not only causing great disturbance among the Florentines, but so much stir in all quarters, as to threaten a schism in the Church. A movement to that effect would, they said, be inevitable as soon as some influential ecclesiastic could be induced to take the lead in it; and such a man might readily be found in the Cardinal of San Piero in Vincoli, who was known to be abetted by France.

These considerations, added to his natural indifference, and dislike to all purely religious questions, induced the Pope to modify his resolve. But on the 26th of February he informed Bracci and Bonsi that he absolutely refused to tolerate Savonarola's preaching any longer; that he was amazed that the Signory should sanction so gross an insult to the Holy See, and that unless measures were taken to silence the Friar before Lent, he would certainly put the city under an interdict. Nor were the orators allowed to reply, for the cardinals interrupted them directly they opened their mouths, by reading aloud some sonnets against the Pope, which had just been received from Florence. And Alexander immediately exclaimed: "What! am I to be made a theme for sonnets?" Bonsi finished his letter by saying: "Therefore, now that the last sermons have arrived in Rome, all our trouble is lost, and there is some one ever at hand to throw on tow and matches to increase the blaze." [1]

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[1] Sermon iv., "sopra l'Esodo," given on the last day of February and the first of Carnival.

[2] Nardi, vol. i. p. 138.

The following day (26th of February) the Pope despatched a very menacing brief to the Signory to the following effect: "On first receiving notice of the pernicious errors diffused by that child of iniquity, Girolamo Savonarola, we required him to abstain entirely from preaching, and to come to Rome to implore our pardon and make recantation; but he refused to obey us. We commanded him, under pain of excommunication, to join the Congregation of St. Mark to the new Tusco-Roman Congregation, and again he refused to obey, thus incurring, *ipso facto*, the threatened excommunication. The which sentence of excommunication we caused to be pronounced and proclaimed in your principal churches, likewise declaring that all who heard, or addressed, or held intercourse with the said Frà Girolamo would also incur the same penalty. Nevertheless, we now hear, that, to the grave hurt of religion and the souls of men, this Friar still continues to preach, despises the authority of the Holy See, and declares the excommunication to be null and void. Wherefore we command you, by your duty of holy obedience, to send the said Frà Girolamo to us, under safe custody; and if he return to repentance, he will be paternally received by us, inasmuch as we seek the conversion, not the death of the sinner. Or at least put him apart, as a corrupt member, from the rest of the people, and keep him confined and guarded in such wise, that he may have speech of none, nor be able to disseminate fresh scandals. But if ye refuse to obey these commands, we shall be forced to assert the dignity and authority of the Holy See, by subjecting you to an interdict and also to other and more effectual remedies." [1]

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[1] *Vide* Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," pp. 106-108, the letter dated 25th of February, 1498.

The Signory paid no attention to the brief, but the Pope, perhaps foreseeing this, sent another at the same time to the Canons of the Duomo,[2] enjoining them to absolutely prohibit Savonarola from preaching in their church. Accordingly, dating from the 2nd of March, the third day of Lent, we find him delivering his sermons in St. Mark's, and beginning with the following exordium: "When it was needful, we gave ye a proof of courage; and are disposed to give others, when the moment shall arrive; but at present it rather beseems us to use moderation."[3] He thus tried to avoid giving offence, while waiting to see of what elements the new Signory for March and April would be formed.

But this proved almost utterly hostile, only three of the members being well disposed to him, while the remaining six were determined foes. One of these was the Gonfalonier, Piero Popoleschi, who, notwithstanding his name, had always belonged to the Medicean party. Instead, however, of joining the Bigi, he had gone over heart and soul to the Arrabbiati, and was now one of those most bent upon persecuting Savonarola. Accordingly, no sooner did the new Signory receive notice of the Papal brief, than they determined to assemble a Pratica, in order to gauge the temper of the citizens, and avoid assuming at once too odious a responsibility. So, on the 3rd of March they summoned a council to deliberate on the best mode of pursuing the Pisan war with so little money in their coffers, and above all on the measures to be adopted concerning the Friar after the brief from Rome. This indeed was the real object of the Pratica.

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[1] This brief was unknown, until unearthed by me in Codex 2053 of the Riccardi Library. Signor Gherardi afterwards discovered the original document in the Florence Archives. *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xiv. Meier assigns the date of the 26th of February to another brief that will be mentioned farther on.

[2] This brief I have been unable to find; but it is mentioned in Bousi's letter of the 27th of February. *Vide* Gherardi, loc. cit., p. 108.

[3] "Prediche sopra l'Esodo." *Vide* the sermon of the third day of Lent.

The Gonfaloniers of the Companies, the twelve Worthies, and other officials confined themselves to generalities, saying that it would be best to calm the Pope's wrath by making him understand that, if they were to lay hands on the Friar, the whole city would be in a tumult. But the Ten of Liberty and Peace[1] were far more explicit. Owing to the importance of their functions it was their special duty to answer all demands then put by the Signory. And as they differed from that body, by holding office for six instead of two months, they had hitherto been unanimous in favour of Savonarola. Accordingly Battista Ridolfi, their appointed spokesman, made a long speech, beginning with a most melancholy picture of the condition of the Republic: "We have disbursed twenty thousand ducats," he said, "and of the fifteen thousand, per month, you assigned to us, have received almost nothing. Our enemies are daily increasing; the Venetian fleet is nearing the port of Leghorn; the dearness of provisions and the disorganization of the troops would prevent us from taking the field on any emergency. Leghorn, a most important position as regards supplies, merchandise, and artillery, stands in great need of repairs, which we cannot afford to make. Volterra, which should be well garrisoned, is left defenceless; the adjacent hills are abandoned, and would fall into the enemy's hands at the first attack. It is the same with the cities in the plains. Pescia and its valley are exposed to the foe. Throughout the district above Vagliano, which is another important place, constables, commissioners, and soldiery are all clamouring for money. The Pisans are already making raids in Maremma, and the plague does the rest. Wherefore the Signori, my colleagues, implore that fitting measures be taken, since the safety of the whole State is in question, and whatever should go wrong, they will be excused *coram Deo*." [1]

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[1] At that time, as we all know, the Ten of War were designated by this name, in accordance with one of the laws promoted by Savonarola, when the popular government was first constituted.

Coming to the subject of Savonarola, Ridolfi then said: "My Signori are of opinion that we should avoid quarrel with the Pope, but must look to the honour of God and the Republic: that it consequently behoves us to thoroughly investigate the Pope's statements, and ascertain whether his complaints be just or not, and if that which he ordains be for good or ill. They decidedly hold the Friar to be a man of virtuous life and great learning, who has never caused any evil in Florence, but always rendered good service both in spiritual and temporal matters. Wherefore if the Pope be opposed to his deeds owing to false information, let all be at once made clear to him in writing; but if (as my Signori think) the affair stands on a different footing, then our sole care should be to uphold the honour of our city. For in fact," concluded Ridolfi, "letters from Milan assure us that the Pope has suddenly changed his mood, and become hostile to the Republic, not only on account of the Friar's sermons, but for other good reasons also; [2] hence our replies should be easy and brief. My colleagues would finally pray you to remember how everything went wrong in Florence in consequence of the expulsion of Frà Bernardino." [1]

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[1] In Signor Lupi's collection of "Pratiche" or debates concerning Savonarola affairs ("Archivio Storico Italiano," Series iii. vol. iii. part i.) the whole of this passage is omitted, possibly because it does not relate to Savonarola. Most of these documents were previously known to me in MS., but a few were discovered by Signor Lupi.

[2] Namely, for entirely political reasons, such as his desire to overthrow the Florentine government.

The citizens' benches then expressed their views, saying: "That the brief gave them much pain, but that the expulsion of the Friar from Florence would cause the most serious disturbance throughout the city. It might be well, in sign of obedience to the Pope, to prohibit the Friar from preaching in the Duomo, especially as he had withdrawn to St. Mark's on the previous day.[2]

The real meaning of all this was that they did not intend to do anything, and the Signory were compelled to yield to the verdict of the majority. Therefore on the following day various letters were forwarded by the Ten to the Florentine ambassador in Rome, together with one from the Signory to the Pope.[3] They stated that on the arrival of the last brief, Savonarola had immediately withdrawn to St. Mark's to prove his submission; they eulogized his doctrine, his life, and his prophecies; and expressed their condemnation of his enemies, "who detest light more than darkness, and merely seek to foment civil discord." And they ended by saying: "We are unable to obey the commands of your Holiness, not only because, in obeying them, we should act unworthily towards our Republic, and unjustly towards one who has deserved so well of his country; but also because, even if we had the will, we lack the power to obey without exciting popular dissensions and placing many persons in danger: such and so great is the favour won by this Friar's integrity. We are sorely pained that these matters should have turned the heart of your Holiness against us, and that you now deprive us of the hopes you formerly held out, touching the material welfare of our Republic.[1] Nevertheless, we shall continue to maintain our wonted allegiance to the Church and the Catholic faith, only premising that the good of our Republic is nearer to our hearts than the convenience of others." [2]

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[1] Frà Bernardino da Monte Feltro, expelled during the reign of Piero de' Medici. *Vide* Parenti, "Storia di Firenze."

[2] *Vide* the before-quoted "Pratiche." This stands third in Signor Lupi's collection.

[3] Dated 4th of March, but really written on the 3rd, as can be ascertained from many subsequent documents. *Vide* also Gherardi's "Nuovi Documenti," p. 111, Note 4.

It is certainly hard to understand why a Signory that was avowedly opposed to Savonarola should have spoken so earnestly in his favour.[3] It was probably with the malicious design of increasing the irritation of the Pope. For, while replying in the terms suggested by the Pratica, they were thus stirring Alexander to a more violent rejoinder. This, too, is the explanation given by the Milanese orator to his master, the Duke.[4] It is certain, at any rate, that the letter was sent in the name of the new Signory, and that Savonarola quietly continued his sermons in St. Mark's.

This church, being too small for the multitude of his hearers, admittance was granted only to men. The women went at first to hear him preach in San Lorenzo, and when the canons forbade him the use of that pulpit, they repaired to S. Niccolò in Via del Cocomero, to attend the sermons of Frà Domenico da Pescia. But they so earnestly besought Savonarala to let them again hear his voice, that he was obliged to devote every Saturday to preaching specially to them.[1]

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[1] The question of Church tithes, and the surrender of Pisa.

[2] *Vide* Documents in Padre Marchese's before-quoted work, p. 165. The letter is written in Latin.

[3] Mons. Perrens held this to be an argument for denying that the Signory were really opposed to Savonarola; but all doubt on this point is removed by the evidence of contemporary opinion and of subsequent events.

[4] In fact the Milanese orator informed Ludovico in the first days of March that after the brief of the 26th of February, the Signory had written to the Pope in defence of Savonarola in order that the irritated Pontiff "might be forced to go farther." *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xii.

The favourite theme of these last Lenten sermons was the definition of how and when a Pope may commit error. "To declare that the Pope, as Pope, can do no wrong, is the same as to say, that neither the Christian as a Christian, nor the ecclesiastic as an ecclesiastic, can do wrong, but that, as individuals, Pope, Christian, or ecclesiastic is equally liable to error.[2] . . . As Pope he cannot err, since the Pope is merged in his office, but when he errs, he is no Pope; and if he issues a wrongful command, it cannot be held to proceed from the Pope.[3]—O Friar, the Pope is God upon earth, and the vicar of Christ.—That is true, but God and Christ command us to love our brother and to do good; wherefore if the Pope command thee to do some deed opposed to charity, if thou obey, then thou wouldst grant more to the Pope than to God."[1] "The Pope may be led into error not only by false reports, but sometimes also from hatred to charity, like unto Pope Boniface VIII., who was a bad Pope, to whom the evil one had said: I will that thou destroy this Order of preaching friars: who began like a fox and died like a dog." "Our Order hath often fought and withstood Popes who sought to do evil.[2] Do we not behold a proof of it now? If I desire to forsake religion and do evil, a bull is soon granted me and full licence; but to do good no sanction is allowed.[3] And the cause of all this great corruption of the Church is the temporal power. When the Church was poor, she was holy; but when temporal power was conferred on her, then her spiritual power was cast down: she was overwhelmed in the dust of riches and worldly things, and began to be puffed with pride."[4]

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[1] Burlamacchi, p. 96.

[2] "Prediche sopra l'Esodo," Sermon vii. This and the preceding sermon are mentioned by Machiavelli in a letter *to a friend*, dated the 8th of March (common style). In this the writer shows himself decidedly unfavourable to Savonarola, since, as we have pointed out elsewhere, he had some leaning, in early youth, towards the Arrabbiati faction, and only modified his opinion of the Friar, at a riper age. This is how he speaks of him in the letter in question: "Going to hear the Friar in his own house (the Convent of St. Mark's), and noting the courage with which he began and continued his sermons, it was impossible not to entertain much admiration for him; for—starting with very terrifying words and with arguments such as seemed most convincing to those who did not discuss them—he declared all his followers to be excellent, and his adversaries most vile, dwelling on all the points suited to weaken the contrary side and fortify his own; and as I was present at the time, I will describe some of these things." After giving certain minute details, Machiavelli next says: "He began to tear your books to pieces, O priests, and to treat you as though ye were not fit food for dogs." As to those who sought to become tyrants, "he said so much, that men went about that day making public conjectures about one who is no nearer a tyrant than you are near heaven! . . . Of the Pope, he says all that could be said of the vilest wretch you please; and thus, in my opinion, he goes on *favouring the times*, and giving colour to his falsehoods." These last words, although very exaggerated with respect to Savonarola, show the general hostility to Rome still prevailing in Florence.

[3] Sermon xi.

It is clear that Savonarola felt that the catastrophe was at hand and could no longer be averted. Nevertheless, instead of withdrawing from the fight and, as would have been easy, seeking safety in concealment, he persisted in trying to achieve the reform of the Church, even at the risk of his own ruin. Hence he now ventured to more openly suggest the assembly of a council, a subject on which he had hitherto observed great caution, merely alluding to it in metaphorical sentences such as the need *of giving a turn to the key*, and so on. Now, with some

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[1] Sermon xviii. [2] Sermon vii. [3] Sermon xvi.

[4] Sermon xii. One of the arguments most frequently urged by him in these sermons was the *indelible* character of the priesthood. "No priest," he said, "can be deprived of this, even by the Pope; he bears it with him even to hell; excommunication cannot annul his power of administering the sacraments; and this is also the opinion of St. Thomas Aquinas." *Vide* Sermons xii and xiii.

CHAPTER VI.

COLLOQUY OF THE FLORENTINE AMBASSADOR WITH THE POPE. MORE BRIEFS AND FRESH THREATS. THE SIGNORY CALLS NEW MEETINGS, AND SAVONAROLA IS INHIBITED FROM PREACHING. HIS LAST LENTEN SERMON AND FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE. HIS LETTER TO THE POPE, AND OTHER LETTERS TO THE PRINCES.

(March, 1498.)

THE Signory's despatch in defence of Savonarola reached Rome on the evening of the 6th of March, and was delivered the next day to the Pope by the two Florentine ambassadors. Alexander seemed much incensed when his secretary read him its contents. "Your Signory," he said, "have written me a wicked letter. I am not misinformed, for I have read your Friar's sermons, and spoken with those who have heard them. He dares to say that the Pope is a broken tool, that it is heretical to believe in the efficacy of the excommunication, and that he would rather go to hell than ask to be absolved from it." Then, becoming more and more excited as he went on, he complained of the Signory for allowing the Friar full liberty to preach, adding that even Savonarola's retreat to his convent had not been enjoined by them. And he concluded by declaring that unless the sermons were finally stopped, he would lay the city under an interdict. On this point he spoke so decidedly, that the orators ended their report to the Ten with the following words: And we are firmly convinced he will do as he says." They tried to defend Savonarola's character and doctrine; but after hearing what they had to say, the Pope replied, "that he objected neither to his good doctrine nor his good works, but condemned him on the score that, being excommunicate, he proved his contempt for the Holy See by neither asking absolution nor yielding obedience."

After this conversation the two orators took their leave, and the Holy Father, in the presence of many bishops and cardinals, gave way to a paroxysm of true Spanish fury, threatening complete ruin on the Republic and the Friar. Thereupon many of the bystanders hastened to Bonsi imploring him to convince the Signory of the necessity of taking strong measures, and, above all, of putting a stop to the sermons if they wished their city to escape serious harm. For Piero de' Medici was going about offering heavy bribes to all who would assist his restoration to Florence; the Arrabbiati were writing and storming to the same effect; and the Milanese and Venetian ambassadors insisting that the Florentines should be forced to join the League. The Pope, therefore, was positively determined to lay them under an interdict, unless they ceased to protect this Friar, who was threatening to throw the whole Church into confusion. At this moment, too, there was so much ill-will in Rome against Florence that Bonsi's house was attacked by armed men, with the evident intent of killing its owner. In the last week of February and first of March he sent repeated accounts of these things to the Ten.[1] And shortly afterwards we find him despatching another letter to the Signory,[1] insisting on the necessity of prohibiting Savonarola from preaching, and adding that this was the only way to facilitate an agreement with the Pope. Meanwhile he enclosed a copy of another and still more threatening brief, to the following effect:—"We should never have supposed that your audacity would rise to the point of contending with us concerning the affairs of Fràte Girolamo Savonarola, almost as though it were a question of carrying on a quarrel, and forgetful of your duty of rendering to Cæsar that which is Cæsar's, to God that which is God's. Wherefore it now behooves us to put an end to these letters and briefs which are multiplying *ad infinitum*. Know therefore and be assured that this Frà Girolamo has been excommunicated by us, owing to no false reports nor instigation from others; but through his disobedience to our commands, as to joining the new Tusco-Roman Congregation, and the manifest contempt he has shown for our decree of excommunication, in continuing to preach as though he were an angel sent by the Lord. We do not condemn him for his good works and the results achieved by him in your city; on the contrary, for all this he has our praise; but we desire that he should come to ask pardon for his petulant pride, and we will readily grant him our forgiveness, when he shall have humiliated himself before us. You have not only encouraged this Friar in his disobedience; but, by preventing all others from preaching, have constituted him, as it were, your oracle of Apollo.[2] Wherefore we shall never desist from our efforts until reparation be made to the honour and dignity of the Holy See, for the insults of this vile worm ye have fostered.[3] Wherefore take good heed as to your own affairs:[1] for not until ye be disposed to obedience will we stoop to grant the requests ye have made us concerning the material interests of your Republic.[2] In any case ye must now reply to us by deeds alone, instead of by farther letters,[3] since we are most firmly resolved to no longer tolerate your disobedience, and will lay the whole city under interdict, and never remove it so long as ye shall continue to favour and protect this monstrous idol of yours."

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[1] *Vide* Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," the remarks at p. 104 and in Note 1. *Vide* also at pp. 104-105, the letters dated 22nd and 25th of February. The letter of the 7th of March is included among the "Documenti" edited by Padre Marchese (doc. xx.), p. 167.

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[1] Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," p. 116.

[2] "A vobis publico edicto vetari obtinuerit ne quis præter eum evangelizaret populo vestro verbum Dei; volens unicus pro Apollineo quodam Florentinorum oraculo haberi satis."

[3] "Ita turbamur, ut quieturi non simus, donec honori Sanctæ huius Sedis, tot modis a tenui isto vermiculo, calore vestro, ulcerato, consuluerimus."

Almost at the same time another brief, nearly identical in substance, but milder in form, was officially and directly transmitted from the Pope to the Signory. In the former of the two he had expressed himself more clearly, and as it were confidentially, because he knew the government to be adverse to the Friar; but in this public document he lowered his tone, in the hope of winning over the Ten and the rest of the Piagnoni. After the usual recapitulation of the history of all the preceding briefs and the decree of excommunication, he again stated that he could not condemn, and must rather praise, Savonarola's life and doctrine;[4] but could no longer tolerate his insolence.

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[1] "Et per interventum simplicis Fratris ne cadat ut aiunt musca in lac, quod inter nos et vos bonis rationibus sensim coagulat."

The Church tithe and the surrender of Pisa.

[3] "Tamdiu duraturo, quamdiu vestro isti monstruoso idolo favorem præstabitis." Mons. Perrens (doc. xi.) published this brief (undated) from the Codex in the Marcian Library of Venice, adding, however, that it was an answer to the Signory's letter of the 4th of March. Herr Meier, on the other hand, assigned it the date of the 26th of February (p. 145, Note 2). Neither of these authors was aware of the existence of the real brief of the 26th of February, quoted in the preceding chapter, and discovered by me in the Codex 2,053 of the Riccardi Library in Florence. The brief alluded to here, and discovered by Mons. Perrens must be posterior to the 26th of February, and is in perfect accordance with all that is related in Bonsi's despatches of the 7th and 9th of March. Of this brief also I discovered an undated copy in the Codex 2,053 mentioned above.

[4] "Quæcumque enim de illius religione et fructibus in ista Civitate ex ipsius admonitionibus subsecutis literæ vestræ attestantur, *non improbavimus nec improbamus, immo huiusmodi opera quæ vobis gratissima sunt magnopere* commendamus."

"Not only," so ran the brief, "has he refused to submit to excommunication, but has declared it to be null, and dared to call upon God to send him to hell if he should ask to be absolved from it. We will no longer tolerate him, nor waste time in correspondence. Ye must prevent him from preaching and give him into our hands, or at least keep him in safe custody, until he abases himself at our feet to implore absolution. This we would then graciously grant, since we ask nothing better, after receiving his submission, than to give him absolution, so that he may continue to preach the word of God."[1] And he once more concluded by saying that, if the Signory refused to do this, they might expect an interdict or even worse punishment.[2]

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[1] "*Quem benigne et libenter excipiemus, ut eum penitentem, absolvamus et Ecclesiæ restituamus*, quem postea apostolico favore his vinculis liberatum et expeditum, ad vos remittemus, ubi verbum Dei evangelizando animas lucrifacere possit."

[2] This second brief, of the 9th of March, was discovered and published by Signor Gherardi; *vide* "Nuovi Documenti," p. 117. He states his opinion (p. 115) that the undated brief, as published by Mons. Perrens, was the original draft, and that it was afterwards modified and tempered at the intercession of some of the cardinals. Thus, in his view, the brief of the 9th of March was the only one sent, first through Bonsi, and then directly from the Pope to the Signory. But in that case how comes the undated brief to be comprised in the old Venetian and Riccardi Codices? The latter Codex, it should be remembered, was compiled by a contemporary of Savonarola, and both contain important collections of documents which have always proved to be authentic. If the draft of the brief was annulled without being sent to Florence, how is it that several old copies of it are extant, and why was it included by an expert among authentic documents? Consequently, my own opinion is that there were two briefs, and that the first and more confidential one was despatched by Bonsi with his letter of the 9th of March. This brief must have been of earlier date than the 9th of March, otherwise it is scarcely probable that the orator could have despatched it to Florence the same day. The delays incidental to government offices would hardly have allowed him to send it off before the 10th or 11th of the month. And although a double brief was by no means a regular thing, it should be kept in mind that Alexander VI. observed no rules at that period. I will also add another remark. In the Pratica of the 14th of March, 1498, of which I shall have to speak farther on, Messer Guidantonio

It is very clear that the nearer the Pope approached the point of resorting to violence, the more cautious and circumspect he became—apart from the harshness of his language—in order to ensure his success. He was using all his cunning to induce the more stubborn of the Florentines to give way. After having so long and ingeniously veiled the political question under the guise of a religious dispute, now that Savonarola accepted this as the basis of the quarrel and appealed to the judgment of a council, he hurried, as if in terror, to put the religious dispute aside by reducing it to a mere question of discipline. Savonarola's doctrine was sound, his life admirable; the only point of attack was his obstinate refusal to obey, and on this the dignity of the Church would admit of no compromise. Let him come to Rome, and all would be ended. This was true, for then he would have been at once seized and strangled in the Castle of St. Angelo. Meanwhile, although the Pope's wrath was hot, his request seemed reasonable, and so the Signory could hopefully submit it to the Pratica that was assembled on the 14th of March.

This was one of the most numerous and important meetings held during these days. In addition to all the principal magistrates, it was attended by twenty-five citizens from each quarter of the town, divided according to custom, in different benches. Whether sincerely or insincerely, all spoke in high praise of the Friar's life and the benefits he had conferred on the city. But after this, opinions were divided. Some wished to yield to the

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Vespucci, in reply to those who considered Florence to be insulted by the terms of the brief, said that he thought "the first brief was a little more imperious, this last one more moderate in tone." Other orators also alluded to two briefs. It might, of course, be supposed that the *first brief* was that of the 26th of February, but that was not *more imperious*, and besides, a Pratica had already been called on the 3rd of March, to consult how to reply to it.

Pope, and were in dread of the interdict; while others mocked at it, and declared that Savonarola should be allowed to continue his sermons. The debate was fierce, for now that it was known that the brief had been sent at the solicitation of the Arrabbiati and the allied powers, the affair was converted into a political and party question. Many speeches were made, and some were of considerable length. Public and private interests, political and religious passions, Pagan and Christian ideas are so strangely jumbled in this debate, that it affords us a photographic picture of the temper of the Florentines of that day.

Giovanni Canacci, the spokesman of the twelve newly-elected Worthies, described the injuries which the interdict would bring upon the commerce of Florence, and was therefore of opinion that the sermons should be stopped. "For my own part," he added, "I would even go farther, and hand over the Friar to the Pope, who has a right to punish him. We must render to every one that which is his. Remember," he exclaimed, as though alleging an irresistible argument, "that the city of Troy was burnt and destroyed through its refusal to give up Helen. And you know what happened in consequence of the capture of Hanno the Carthaginian. After examples such as these, shall we deny the Pope his own?"

Paolo Antonio Soderini, a citizen of weighty influence, then rose to speak against the brief in the name of the Ten, saying that, "even to the Perugians,[1] no such brief should have been sent; that it was an apple of discord purposely thrown into the city by their enemies. The Pope must be made to understand that they would not join the League at any price, but were bent on maintaining the honour of God and the security of their country. As to Frà Girolamo, he was to be cherished like a rare and precious jewel, since all Italy had not his equal." And Lorenzo Lanzi, in the name of the officials of the Monte di Pietà, was moved by Soderini's words to declare that—"One should rinse one's mouth before speaking of Frà Girolamo, instead of proposing to hand him over to the Pope. Where should we be, but for his aid? Why should you fear an interdict? Let it come, as others have come on us before! What worse could befall us than that sudden attack by the Emperor, who was stirred against us? Did not the Lord then come to your rescue? Rather ye should make known to the Pope all the doctrine and goodness of this servant of God!"

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[1] The frequent repetition of this phrase shows that Florence was strongly irritated against Perugia just then.

But hereupon another speaker broke in. This was Messer Guidantonio Vespucci, who was equally influential as an advocate and a citizen, and who, in 1494, had opposed Soderini, and been the champion of aristocratic government in Florence. His speech was a masterpiece of astuteness, legal syllogisms, and sophistry. "This is a very serious affair," he said; "we should weigh the *pro* and the *contra*, the good or evil that may result to the city. It is certainly to be regretted," he added, with hypocritical unction, "that we should be deprived of spiritual consolation during Lent; but, all things considered, it is wiser to yield to the Pope. We desire the Tithe on Church property, we desire Pisa and the absolution of the Friar. Now, to ask these favours of the Pope, while giving him offence, seems to me contrary to reason. Whether Frà Girolamo be in the right or in the wrong, you will obtain nothing from the Pope without giving him satisfaction. And if the interdict be imposed, your commerce will be ruined. But *versâ vice*"—and here the lawyer's cunning became almost demoniacal—"when one reflects on the harm that may ensue to the city by suspending the Friar's sermons, it must also be remembered that, as the command emanates from our lawful superior, no sin is incurred by ourselves. He who fears censure, even when it be unjust, is approved of the Lord. Some hold this to be a small thing, but I deem it great, for the right of censure is now the sole weapon of the Church, and she will try to enforce it by every means, seeing that otherwise she would forfeit all her influence over mankind. It is urged that we should guard the honour of God, but these are ambiguous words, for it is certain that the power of the Pope is derived from God, whereas it is doubtful whether Frà Girolamo be truly a messenger of the Lord. Wherefore we judge it to be expedient to render obedience to the Pope in whatever way your Excellencies think best."

This speech made an extraordinary impression, since it showed the Florentines, who cared little for religion, how to secure their own interests without hurt to their conscience. But Messer Enea della Stufa, the first to speak for the citizens' benches, tried to combat the proposal, by saying: "God came to our aid even when all Italy was against us. Why should we now abandon the safe course pointed out to us by the Friar's sermons, to enter on a doubtful one? The Pope is an authority on spiritual, but not on temporal, things. It would be beneath our dignity to become his instruments, *et ut ita dicam*, his turnkeys. This is all the work of the potentates," he exclaimed, "and if you yield on this point, the Pope will exact even viler deeds from you. The members of my bench are not afraid of the interdict, and believe that, even if it were imposed, the trade of the city would go on as before, and bales of wool be packed and unpacked as usual." But his words produced little effect. Vespucci had succeeded in giving voice to the feeling then destined to prevail, and many now rose to second his motion; among them, Giuliano dei Gondi, who plainly said that nearly all of his bench wished to vote for the suspension of the sermons. "Are we to put ourselves against the whole world? The interdict would cause grievous harm, and many of us have already ceased to send merchandise to Naples and elsewhither. If Messer Enea had anything to lose he would speak in a different tone. I, whose wine-casks are scattered all over Italy and in foreign parts, know well that, if the interdict be imposed on us, I shall be unable to meet my obligations. We shall be pillaged on all sides."

That the affair was taking a very bad turn was still more clearly seen when Francesco Valori began to speak for his bench, although, to avoid making matters worse, he was far more cautious than usual. "Not a word has been said among us of closing St. Mark's, for in a free city no good works, but only unlawful works, are forbidden. This monastery is a school of virtue, and will be in still higher repute fifty years hence. As regards the Friar, I advise you to honour and venerate and cherish him more dearly than any one that has ever existed during the last two hundred years. These Briefs do not emanate spontaneously from the Pope, but are wheedled out of him by enemies of our city. We must proceed very cautiously, for if this wheel be turned it will only raise a disturbance." Antonio Canigiani was more explicit, for he frankly said: "That his bench feared neither excommunications nor interdicts, knowing that certain Florentines were at the bottom of it all. "It is needless to refer to heathen examples! The Old and New Testaments suffice to show that Frà Girolamo is a true prophet. And as the Pope approves of his doctrine and his life, how can he excommunicate him? I do not dispute the authority of the Pope, but I say that he is liable to error, and I have more fear of God's wrath than of his. I will not discuss the validity or invalidity of the excommunication, but I say that this city has never recognized any superior power, and beg to remind your Excellencies that our freedom must not be subject to the behest of a pontiff." But these words had no more effect that those of Bernardo Nasi, who, almost with tears in his eyes, wound up by exclaiming: "God grant that those who love to see scandal, may not see so much as might move stones to pity. I beseech your Excellencies to be on the alert, for here our liberty is in danger." [1]

Of thirty-two orators, eight only were decidedly favourable to the Friar; seventeen had advised, more or less earnestly, the suspension of the sermons, and the rest were uncertain. It was, accordingly, but too plain that things were going ill for Savonarola, and that the hostile Signory might now venture on some decision against him. The truth was that Alexander VI. feigned to be so mild and to ask so little, in order that it might seem sheer obstinacy to refuse obedience at the risk of harming the city. But the first point once yielded, the adverse party would triumph, and the rest would follow of itself. It was precisely this that embittered the strife. On the one hand the Florentines had to think of their material interests, on the other, of their moral and religious welfare. The dispute might have risen to true historical importance had the Florentines appreciated the necessity of defending virtue, justice, and freedom of conscience at all risks, and of firmly resisting this guilt-stained Pope. But they had no strong feeling in the matter. Savonarola's adversaries simply spoke from the standpoint of commercial interest, saying that it was inexpedient to rouse the Pope and the allies to hostility for the sake of a friar's sermons. Also, that however just Savonarola's cause might be, their consciences would be absolved by obedience to the Pope. To words such as these an outburst of indignation would have been the only adequate reply. On the other hand, Savonarola's adherents failed to urge in his defence that he was the representative of the sacred right of freedom of conscience and the regenerator of faith, but upheld him as the messenger of the Lord, and the prophet by whom miracles were to be achieved. None dared to assail the Pope, whose authority was recognized by all. There was nowhere that resolve to subordinate worldly and material interests to those of morality, which at certain moments inspires nations to deeds of heroism. When expecting some irrepressible flight towards higher planes of moral and religious thought, we find instead cool calculations as to the injury the interdict might cause to the sale of wine and wool. When awaiting some impressive outburst of the evangelical spirit, so strenuously inculcated by Savonarola, we only hear allusions to Helen, the Trojans, or the Carthaginians. When hoping that the crimes of the Borgia would stir the conscience of the Florentines to some violent reaction, we find them remarking that in any case obedience, even to a Pope Alexander, would necessarily be a merit in the sight of the Lord. Consequently the ground was giving way beneath Savonarola's feet, for virtue and faith were his sole weapons of defence. The drama was hurrying to its predestined end.

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[1] This Pratica was quoted in the first edition of this work, and has since been published in Signor Lupi's collection of "Pratiche," *loc. cit.*

But although the Signory had the majority of the Pratica on their side, before coming to a decision, they summoned another on the 17th,[1] limited to nineteen of the more influential citizens, from whom, as being *quasi cor Civitatis*, they asked fresh advice on the course to be pursued. This Pratica opined that Savonarola should be persuaded to abandon the pulpit, but judged that the Pope's further requests were insulting to the Republic. The decreed result was immediately communicated to Bonsi by the Ten, who, being composed of the Friar's friends, wrote on the 18th of March: "That, although all were persuaded of the excellence of Savonarola's life and doctrine, which had gained praise even from the Pope, and although likewise convinced that the Briefs had been based on false reports, they had resolved to obey the Pontiff, in the hope that, according to his promise, he would soon console them, by restoring their spiritual food." [1]

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[1] There is only a note of this Pratica, without any details of the speeches in "The Frammenti di Pratiche," reg. 66, at sheet 25. *Vide* also Lupi's collection, *loc. cit.*; and Nardi, vol. i. p. 142.

Bonsi, who was already on the eve of becoming one of the Friar's worst foes, and was accordingly irritated by the continual praises of him expressed by the Ten, had addressed them an almost violent letter on the 16th of March. "I can obtain nothing, hope nothing from the Pope," he wrote, "unless you decide to put an end to the sermons. Do not imagine that you will be allowed to disregard the Papal excommunication and censures, which are now the only weapons retained by the Church. You may count on an interdict unless you obey. I am in continual peril of my life, and it will be worse when the interdict is launched. Wherefore I pray you to recall me without delay." [2] And a day or so later he wrote again to the same effect and in the same urgent tone, warning the Ten that Piero de' Medici seemed more cheerful than usual, and was holding continual interviews with the Pope. Also, that His Holiness, besides threatening an interdict, now declared that he would imprison all the Florentine merchants in Rome.[3] In fact, the latter wrote to the Signory in great alarm about this, on the 19th of March.[4] Therefore on the arrival of the dispatch from the Ten, before dawn on the 22nd of March, the ambassador immediately sent to ask an audience of the Pope, who, after keeping him waiting all day at the Vatican, only received him on the 23rd. He was already aware of what had taken place, and showed cold satisfaction, but nevertheless demanded a reply from the Signory to his brief. He blamed them severely for still allowing other friars to preach in St. Mark's, who always repeated the same things. Then, all at once, he seemed pacified, saying that he would do good to Florence, and that he would pardon Savonarola and again permit him to preach as soon as the man asked absolution, "since, for his own part, he did not condemn his (the Friar's) doctrine, but only the fact of preaching while still unabsolved and of calumniating his person and disregarding his censure." [1] But this was by no means the Pope's real mind. In fact, on the 31st of March, Bonsi wrote that it had been impossible to obtain another audience, and that he had learned from the Cardinal of Perugia that the Pope intended to send a prelate to Florence with the object of inducing Savonarola to come to Rome. He would be safely guarded on the journey there and back, and not a hair of his head should be injured. Amazed at this, Bonsi had reminded the Cardinal of the repeated promises of the Pope, and observed that any attempt to remove Savonarola from Florence would indubitably rouse some serious disturbance. But all had been in vain, nor would the Pope consent to receive him just then. So he wrote that "the mind of his Holiness was being worked upon by persons desirous of promoting disturbance in our city."[2]

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[1] Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," p. 124. [2] *Ibid* p. 121.

[3] He sometimes sent two despatches in one day. *Vide* Gherardi (*loc. cit.*) Bonsi's letters of the 18th, 19th, and 20th, at pp. 124, 126, and 128.

[4] Gherardi, p. 127.

Meanwhile, on the 17th of March, the very day that the Signory decided on silencing Savonarola, the latter had preached in St. Mark's to an audience composed solely of women. His sermon was full of tenderness, seemed almost a song of praise to the Lord, and expressed his gloomy presentiments in highly poetical terms: "Lord, we pray not for tranquillity, nor that our tribulations may cease; we pray for Thy spirit and Thy love; that Thou grant us strength and grace to overcome adversity. Thou seest that the wicked are growing more incorrigibly bad, wherefore put forth Thy power and Thy hand; tears are all that remain to me." The same evening he received the order forbidding him to preach, and the following day, the third Sunday in Lent, he gave his last sermon and bade farewell to his people.

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[1] Gherardi, *op. cit.*, Bonsi's letter of the 23rd of March to the Signory, at p. 130, and his letter of the same date to the Ten, at p. 131.

[2] Gherardi, *op. cit.*, Bonsi's letter to the Ten, at p. 133.

He began with a thoroughly scholastic dissertation on primary and secondary causes; said that in absence of secondary, recourse must be had to primary causes, and then proceeded to the application of this principle. "Thus in the Church, the believer must first apply to his priest or confessor; failing these to his bishop or the Pope; and finally, if all the ecclesiastical hierarchy be corrupt, he must turn to Christ, who is the primary cause, and say—Thou art my confessor, my bishop and my Pope; provide Thou against the ruin of the Church; let Thy vengeance begin.—O Friar! thou wouldst weaken the ecclesiastical power!—This is not true; I have always submitted and even now submit to the correction of the Roman Church; I seek not to weaken, but rather to augment its power. But I will not be subject to the powers of Hell; and all power that is opposed to good, is not of God, but of the devil." [1] He then went on to

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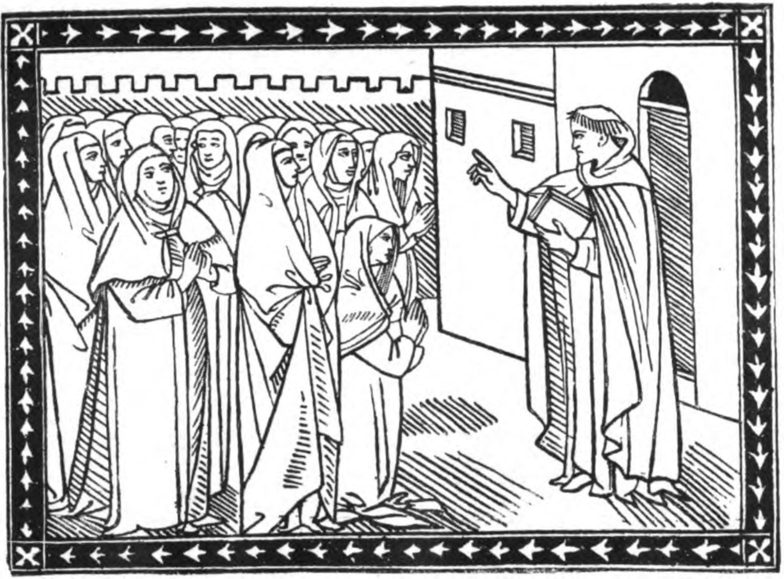
[1] Here it may not be superfluous to quote some of Frà Benedetto's ideas concerning the Church; for this monk was one of Savonarola's most devoted disciples. In his "Vulnera Diligentis" (bk. i. ch. 19, Magliabecchian Codex, cl. xxxiv. 7, sheet 31ᵗ) one of the interlocutors is made to say that "the Church is simply a congregation of the faithful, *sive*



SAVONAROLA PREACHING TO THE NUNS.

discuss the great difficulties he had encountered in preaching his doctrines, the fierceness of the struggle in which he had been engaged, and the irresistible impulse by which he had been forced to it.

"Ofttimes, after leaving the pulpit, I have bethought me and said: I will preach no more of these things; but will rest quiet and leave all to God. And yet on again mounting to this place, I have been unable to contain myself; unable to preach otherwise. The message of the Lord hath been as a consuming fire within my bones and my heart; and I have not been able to endure it, but

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unitas iustorum." The other speaker inquires: "Why is it not absolutely said that *Ecclesia est Papa?*—Because the Pope is not precisely the real head of the Church, but vicar of the supreme head of the Church, Jesus Christ, that He not having remained on earth, bequeathed to his vicar the power to bind and to loose, justly *tamen* and not unjustly.—In that case," rejoins the first speaker, "Jesus Christ and His elect constitute the Church proper; and it is unfitting to say that the Church is composed of all who believe. Yet this does not imply that the Pope be not *aliquomodo* the Church, nor that as Pope he can be liable to error. . . ."

"Papa quidem, canonice, ut oportet, decidendo rem ad fidem et christianos mores pertinentem, errare penitus non potest. Et ita faciens, dicitur tota Ecclesia, que errare non potest, virtualiter in ipso Papa fecisse. Et breviter tanto in sustantia, it is to be said as follows, that when it is said commonly, that the Pope cannot err in canonical decisions, it signifies that all the Church cannot err, that is as being virtually personified in the Pope. Besides, the Church cannot err in its true member, *id est*, in no true Christian. Wherefore it is impossible that the Christian err as a Christian, or the Pope as the Pope, and it were blasphemy to say to the contrary. . . . But when the Pope is judge in his own cause, even as Alexander VI. when condemning the prophet (Savonarola), for he accused him of unjust deeds; then it is not *virtualiter*, the Church that gives judgment, but the Pope in his own cause. And in cases such as this the Pope is liable to error, through ignorance, or even through guilt; and then he is naught but a putrid member of the Church. . . . Now likening the Church to the likeness of a human body, I say and conclude, that the Holy Church has but one head, that is ascended into heaven, and that this head is Jesus Christ, the Son of God; that all there is upon earth is the neck, appertaining to that head, and that this neck is the Holy Pontiff." This language, rough and uncultured though it be, serves to acquaint us with the ideas and arguments held by many of Savonarola's followers, on the authority of the Pope and on the Church.

constrained to speak, for I feel all burning and all inflamed by the Lord's Spirit. But again, when I descend, I say in myself: I will no more speak of these things. O, my Lord, O Spirit, Thou that fearest none in this world; Thou that art no respecter of persons be they who they may; Thou declarest the truth to all. O Spirit, Thou dost rouse persecutions and troubles against Thee; Thou stirrest the waves of the sea, like unto the wind; Thou raiseth tempests. . . . I cry: Pray be still! but the Spirit replieth that it cannot rest. Let us therefore leave all to the Lord; He is the master that turneth the tool to His own ends, and when He needeth it no longer, casteth it aside, even as He cast aside Jeremiah who was stoned to death; and even so will it be with us, when we have served His end. Well! we are content: let the Lord's will be done, for the worse suffering is ours on earth, the greater will be our crown of glory in heaven."

Finally, Savonarola announced the decree received by him, and bade his hearers farewell: "Yesterday at the third hour after sunset, there came hither a messenger from those who rule over us, saying that they prayed me, for many considerations, to preach no more. I asked—Come ye from your Masters?—Yes!—And I too must consult my Master: to-morrow ye shall have my reply.—I now make answer in this place, that the Lord hath granted and yet not granted your prayers: that is, hath granted them as to my abstention from preaching, but not granted them as regards your salvation. Bad news is coming to Florence, misfortunes will overwhelm her. Ye fear an interdict from the Pope; but the Lord will lay one upon ye that will deprive the wicked of life and of substance. We will obtain by our supplications that which we may not obtain by sermons; and we exhort all good men to do likewise. O Lord, I pray Thee, have mercy on the good, and delay Thy promises no longer."[1]

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[1] The last of the Sermons on Exodus.

Thus ended, on the 18th of March, 1498, the last sermon of Frà Girolamo Savonarola, who had preached continually in Florence for the last eight years, and without interruption save from his brief visit to Bologna, and occasional absence for a few days at Prato, Pistoia, Siena, and Lucca for the purpose of giving sermons in those cities. In Lent and Advent he had been daily in the pulpit; during the intermediate months had preached on every festival of the Church: and three stout volumes of his sermons had yearly appeared, collected by the indefatigable Violi. Thus Savonarola's life was spent, and his strength consumed for the moral, political, and material benefit of the Florentines who now condemned him to silence! Frà Domenico da Pescia and Frà Mariano Ughi continued to preach for a few days after the decree; but the Pope had already protested against this, and therefore, notwithstanding the excuses sent by the Ten, for the sake of delay, the Signory soon stopped these sermons also.[1]

Savonarola thoroughly understood the drift of these acts, and was determined not to be taken unawares Ever since the arrival of the last Brief from Rome, he had clearly realized his present position, and being decided what course to adopt, had even pushed his loyalty to the point of communicating it to the Pope on the 15th of March. He was of so noble and generous a temper, that even when resolved on open war with this crafty and sinister foe, he felt obliged to give him fair warning to prepare for attack. "Most Holy Father," he wrote, "I always believed that it was the duty of a good Christian to defend religion, and purify manners; but in this task I have encountered nought but anguish and tribulation; and found none to give me aid. I placed my hope in your Holiness; but you have elected to take part with my enemies, and empowered savage wolves to assail me.

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[1] *Vide* Padre Marchese, *loc. cit.*, doc. xxii.

Nor would you by any means hearken to the reasons I brought forward—in no excuse of wrongdoing—but to prove the truth of my doctrines, my innocence, and my submission to the Church. Wherefore I can no longer hope aught from your Holiness; but can only appeal to Him that chooseth the weak vessels of this world to confound the roaring lions of wicked men. He will help me to prove and maintain, before the world, the holiness of the cause for which I endure so much, and He will inflict dire chastisement on those who persecute me and would defeat my work. For myself, I seek no earthly reward, but await death with longing. Let your Holiness delay no more, but take heed to your salvation." [1]

He was resolved to make a final effort to procure the assembly of a Council, appeal to it in his own defence denounce the abominable life and crimes of Rodrigo Borgia, and declare his election void as having been obtained by simony. He would also prove that the Pope was a heretic and an unbeliever, that his life was unworthy of a Christian, and that he was accordingly the main source of all the evils lacerating the Church. Nor would there be any lack of documents, both public and private, to support these charges. Thus, the necessity of reforming the Church would be proved, and the enterprise finally begun. It was in allusion to this, that he had so frequently repeated the phrase: *one day we will give a turn to the*

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[1] I have adopted the reading of the Riccardi Codex 2053, that is also followed by Meyer. Burlamacchi gives a paraphrase of this letter, which he styles *a lesson to the Pope;* other contemporaries, as will be seen farther on, call it a *terrible letter.* Herr Rudelbach gives an Italian version of it in his "Savonarola und seine Zeit" (doc. xii.), that is even more daring in tone, but he does not say where he found it. Among other things it contains these words: "I am therefore prepared to maintain these truths, for which we now suffer so much evil from you; and prove them, I say, against you and all adversaries, by natural and supernatural arguments, and also by Divine intervention. And these things shall be manifested in such wise," &c. It is evident that the original text has been paraphrased by the translator. *Vide* also Quétif, vol. ii., p. 298.

key; we will cry aloud: *Lazare, veni foras*, and similar expressions. That day was now come.

To call a General Council without the authorization, or even against the will of the Pope, was not considered in those times, as it would be at present, an act of daring insubordination and violence. By the decrees of the Council of Constance, the Pope was bound to convoke a Council every ten years, and in case of neglecting so to do, the princes were authorized to summon all the scattered members of the Christian body to meet together and represent the Church Universal. King Charles VIII., who when in Rome, had been advised by no fewer than eighteen Cardinals to seize the Borgia's person, in order to proceed to the election of a new and worthier Pontiff; had always been in favour of calling a Council, and being repeatedly instigated thereto by Savonarola and many others, had been several times on the point of taking the initiative in the matter. First of all, however, he wished to solemnly consult the Doctors of the Sorbonne, as to his right to take this step, and they passed a vote in his favour on the 7th of January, 1497.[1] If all this had been insufficient to decide the vacillating temper of the King, who always hesitated on the brink of an enterprise; it was certainly enough to give strong encouragement to Savonarola and many others who considered a Council to be the sole means of remedying the evils harassing the Church, and avoiding the danger of schism. These ideas were now regarded with still wider favour, as it became more generally known that they had the support of several members of the Sacred College, and notably of the Cardinal of San Pietro in Vincoli, who having been defeated at the last election by the Borgia's gold, was furious against him, and seemed destined to become his successor. Averse to half measures or compromises, he publicly declared the election of Pope Alexander VI. to be null and void, and stigmatised him as a heathen and a heretic. Many of the things he had said while a Cardinal, he afterwards reiterated when Pope, in his Bull of the 14th of January, 1505, in which he proclaimed that every election obtained by simony was void, and not to be rendered valid even by subsequent acts of homage from the Cardinals.

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[1] *Vide* Raynald ad ann. 1492 § 2–5; Bercastel, "Storia del Cristianesimo," bk. lvi. § 42; Padre Marchese, "Storia del Convento di San Marco," in the "Scritti varii," p. 225 and fol. Theodorico Brie, in his "Storia del Concilio di Costanza," makes use of the following words: "Nam et beata Petri cathedra, ut nosti, plerumque pastore vacavit. Imo et ipsa eadem, quam et sponsam meam nomino, saepissime vacasti; nec propter hoc quisquam autumet, te non mansisse sponsam meam. Sufficeret namque unus justus, etsi omnes caeteri essent haeretici, ut et ego sponsus tuus semper et essem et remanerem" (*Vide* Rudelbach, *op. cit.*, p. 32).

Savonarola neither knew nor foresaw that even Giuliano della Rovere and the other Cardinals adhering to his views were politicians who went with the times. Accordingly he deemed the way to be far better prepared for the proposed step than it really was. He had long and vainly waited for King Charles to take the initiative; but now time pressed, and delays were dangerous. Hence he resolved to throw down the glove and boldly face, singlehanded, the shock of the Borgia's wrath.

First, however, it was necessary to despatch his famous "Letters to the Princes" *i.e.*, to the sovereigns of France, Spain, England, Hungary, and Germany. These letters had long been prepared, and their contents were nearly identical.[1] "The moment of vengeance has arrived, the

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[1] These "Lettere ai Principi" have been frequently reprinted, and some writers have sought to contest their authenticity. But this is established beyond doubt; for the Letters are found in very old and authentic codices, as, for instance, in the Riccardi Codex 2,053, and in many others; they are mentioned by the old biographers in the depositions of the accused given farther on, spoken of in detail in the documents of Savonarola's trial, and alluded to in Frà Benedetto's "Vulnera diligentis," and many other works of the period.

Lord commands me to reveal new secrets, and make manifest to the world the peril by which the bark of St. Peter is threatened, owing to your long neglect. The Church is all teeming with abomination, from the crown of her head to the soles of her feet; yet not only do ye apply no remedy, but ye do homage to the cause of the woes by which she is polluted. Wherefore, the Lord is greatly angered, and hath long left the Church without a shepherd. . . . Now, I hereby testify, *in verbo Domini*, that this Alexander be no Pope, nor can be held as one; inasmuch as, leaving aside the mortal sin of simony, by which he hath purchased the Papal Chair, and daily selleth the benefices of the Church to the highest bidder, and likewise putting aside his other manifest vices, I declare that he is no Christian, and believes in no God, the which surpasses the height of all infidelity." After this preamble, Savonarola proceeds to invite all the princes of Christendom to summon a Council with the utmost speed, in some *fit and free* place. On his side, he pledges himself to make good all his assertions, and not by force of argument alone; but promising that God would send signs and portents to attest the truth of his words. He then added a few expressions suited to the temper of the prince he was addressing, and best adapted to rouse him to action. Thus, he reminded the vain Maximilian of his dignity as an Emperor, saying that nothing could be more worthy of it than to rescue the Church from danger. To Ferdinand and Isabella he wrote: "Of what avail are your victories over the infidels? Ye raise an edifice without; while within, the foundations of the Church are giving way, and the whole building falling to ruin. He reminded King Charles of the numerous things he had so frequently predicted to him: "Thou canst not certes be ignorant of the many opportunities of well-doing vouchsafed thee by the Lord; wherefore, if thou shrink from this holy enterprise, heavier chastisement will be inflicted on thee than on others. Remember that God hath already given thee the first sign of His wrath.[1] Thou that beareth the title of the Most Christian King, thou whom the Lord hath chosen and armed with the sword of His vengeance, wilt thou consent to the ruin of the Church? Canst thou be ignorant of the many and sore perils by which she is encompassed?"

Savonarola undoubtedly placed his chief reliance on King Charles: he was aware of that monarch's desire to reform the Church; and knew that he now thought of it with increasing favour, recent troubles having caused his mind to revert to the affairs of Italy and religion.[2] If he

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[1] An Italian translation, by Frà Ignazio da Ferrara, of the letters to the King of Spain and the emperor, appeared in the miscellanea of Baluzio. Both were again published by Meier, together with the letter to the King of France in its original Latin. All were afterwards reprinted by Perrens, who supposed that he was the first to reproduce the last of the three. From imperfect examination of the depositions of witnesses, and of the documents of the trial, Meier gave them a wrong date. Those to the Kings of Hungary and England are missing, but they can have differed little from the others.

[2] This is confirmed by De Commines, who gives us a minute description of the actual state of mind of King Charles: "Si avoit son coeur tousjours de faire et accomplir le retour en Italie, et confessoit bien y avoir fait des fautes largement et les contoit." He then adds, that the king "avoit mis de nouveau son immagination de vouloir vivre selon les commandemens de Dieu, et mettre la justice en bon ordre et l'Eglise." And he had already used his best efforts to reform its abuses: "mais il êust, eu bien à faire, à ranger les gens d'Eglise" (bk. viii. chap. xxv.). Also, by a letter of Louis XII. to the Florentine Republic, dated 4th of June, 1498, (Desjardins, "Négociations," vol. ii. p. 13), it is plain that France had intended to undertake the reform of the Church.

As we have previously noted, Padre Marchese is of opinion that the Cardinal of San Piero in Vincoli had visited Savonarola, when passing through Florence in the wake of the French army, in order to moot even then the project of a Council. But Savonarola, when repeatedly questioned on this point during his trial, declared that he had never made any agreement with the Cardinal, although he had known him to be in favour of calling the Council: "I saw, and indeed knew San Piero in Vincoli to be disposed to the plan; because a certain ser Cristofano, formerly a knight of the Court of Mirandola, came to me with a private could once induce the king to take the step of calling the Council, he had every reason to hope that the whole of Christendom would come to his aid. All were weary of the abominations of Rome : France seemed always ready for action ; Germany and England were already stirred by the agitation that afterwards led to reform ; encouragement, therefore, was to be expected from all sides.

Nevertheless, before despatching his "Letters to the Princes," he showed them to certain trustworthy friends maintaining relations with the different European Courts, in order that they might at once send information of what was proposed, and warmly urge the convocation of the Council. Simone del Nero was to write to one of his brothers in Spain ; Domenico Mazzinghi to Giovanni Guasconi, the ambassador in France ; Francesco del Pugliese was to address the king of England through a friend ; Giovanni Cambi was to write to the Emperor, and a friend of the Convent in Ferrara to the sovereign of Hungary. Each of these persons was supplied with a draft of the letter he was charged to send, the which draft was written by Niccolo da Milano, who had acted as Savonarola's secretary for the last three years; while, together with their own communications, all were to send a copy of Savonarola's last letter to the Pope.[1] All these documents were on the way between the end of March and the first days of April. Thus, everything was prepared for the decisive and solemn proceedings, to which

letter from the said San Piero in Vincoli, and told me that, before another day was out, a squadron of Cardinals would come to Florence to meet in Council. But, forasmuch as I held him to be a liar and a turncoat, I gave him no definite reply."

[1] *Vide* in Appendix to the Italian edition, the documents of Savonarola's trial, and the depositions of Giovanni Cambi, Domenico Mazzinghi, and Simone del Nero. The latter states that he spontaneously added much praise of Savonarola to the letter he wrote from the draft supplied to him. *Vide* also the letters addressed to Niccolò del Nero, and Giovacchino Guasconi the Florentine ambassadors in France. (Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xv.)

the speedy despatch of the "Lettere ai Principi" was to be the first step. But these letters were never sent.[1]

In the life of individuals as well as of nations, there comes a moment when the whole course of events is suddenly changed, and a hidden hand seems to turn all things to evil. In Savonarola's case, this moment had undoubtedly come. He was anxiously expecting replies to the letters sent by his friends, and specially anxious to receive one from France, when suddenly the news came instead, that the messenger directed to the latter country had been robbed by a band of Milanese cut-throats, and that Mazzinghi's letter to the ambassador in France had unfortunately fallen into the hands of the Duke.[2] The haste with which Ludovico forwarded it to Cardinal Ascanio in Rome, the eagerness with which the latter presented it to the Pope, and the rage it excited in him, may be more easily imagined than described. At last the Borgia held in his hands a documentary proof of the audacity of the Friar, against whom all the potentates of Italy were arrayed, and whose enemies were already dominant in Florence. Thus, Savonarola was beleaguered and threatened on all sides, even before the final struggle began. Nevertheless, the course of events was so marvellously rapid, that he had no time to measure the enormity of these unexpected perils before, like a thunderbolt from heaven, another and still worse misfortune befell him.

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[1] This serves to explain why these letters have only been preserved in the shape of rough drafts without any date. *Vide*, the Trial and the other prisoners' depositions.

[2] At p. 132 of his "Nuovi Documenti," even Signor Gherardi seems to doubt the authenticity of these "Lettere ai Principi," from having found no mention of them in the ambassadors' despatches. But how could they be mentioned when the "Lettere ai Principi" were never sent off, and only privately announced? Both the author of the "Vita Latina" (at sheet 29) and Burlamacchi (at p. 86) state that the Duke of Milan had received intelligence of the letter to the French king. It is true they assign no date to the event, but both affirm that the letter seized by the Duke was from Savonarola. But from what we have already related, it is clear that the captured letter was the one from Mazzinghi to Guasconi. Besides, the ambassadors' silence is sufficiently explained by the circumstance that at this moment the events going on in Florence entirely changed the aspect of affairs, and deprived the letters of Savonarola and his friends of all importance, although a great point was repeatedly made of them during the Friar's trial.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ORDEAL BY FIRE.

(April 7, 1498.)

IT was one of those moments in which the popular aspect seems to undergo a magical change. Savonarola's adherents had either disappeared or were in hiding; all Florence now seemed against him. Messengers from Rome and Milan were continually coming and going. The spies of the Duke were on the alert, and wrote to their master that some great stroke was hourly expected on the part of the Signory.[1] In fact, it was well known that the Gonfalonier Popoleschi, and Berlinghieri, one of the

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[1] Paolo Somenzi, as we have seen, resided in Florence, and Giovanni Tranchedino in Bologna; they superintended the proceedings of many of the Duke's agents and adherents. During the months of March and April Somenzi supplied the Duke with detailed accounts of the numerous snares laid for Savonarola by the Arrabbiati, and assured him of the *good will* of the Signory, all of whom were hostile to the Friar. Tranchedino at Bologna continually wrote that he had received intelligence from Florence, "that some of the principal leaders who had hitherto ruled were in great agitation of mind; and either through this affair of the Friar, or from some other cause, within a few days some movement or tumult might be expected that would probably lead to a complete change of government" (Bologna, 20th of March, 1498). *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xii.

Priors, were doing their utmost to effect a radical change in the Government.

As if this were not enough, the public attention was stirred towards the end of March by a very strange and unexpected event. A certain Frà Francesco di Puglia, of the order of St. Francis, now delivering the Lenten sermons in St. Croce, had begun to attack Savonarola with singular vehemence and pertinacity. He stigmatized him as a heretic, a schismatic, and a false prophet, and not satisfied with this, challenged him to prove the truth of his doctrines by the ordeal by fire.[1] Similar challenges had been previously offered, but Savonarola had always treated them with merited contempt, believing it beneath his dignity to reply to them. But, as it now chanced, Frà Domenico considered himself to be personally challenged, because he was preaching in his master's stead, and also because, when at Prato the preceding year, the same friar had provoked his wrath by insulting words against Savonarola's doctrines. They had then agreed to hold a public discussion; but on the appointed day the Franciscan, notwithstanding that he was the aggressor and had even then proposed the ordeal by fire, hurried from the city, under pretext of having been summoned to Florence by his superiors.[2]

Accordingly, no sooner was Frà Domenico informed of the fresh provocation offered by the Franciscan, than he hastened to publish his "Conclusions," and declared that he would willingly go through the ordeal by fire since Savonarola must reserve himself for greater things.[3] As he was not one to shrink from his word, the affair had already become serious before Savonarola had time to think of preventing it. But when the Franciscan saw that Frà Domenico was in earnest, he instantly sought a pretext to draw back. He went about repeating that "his quarrel was with Savonarola alone, and that although he expected to be consumed, he was ready to enter the fire with him in order to procure the destruction of that disseminator of scandal and false doctrine; but would have nothing to do with Frà Domenico."[1] This wretched affair might have well ended here, for Savonarola severely reproved Frà Domenico's superfluous zeal,[2] and the Franciscan was only too glad to seize a chance of escape. But, on the contrary, just when the contest seemed on the point of dying out, it suddenly burst forth afresh.

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[1] Allusion has been already made elsewhere to the challenge offered by a preacher of Santa Spirito.

[2] "Vita Latina," at sheet 47; Burlamacchi, p. 118.

[3] Burlamacchi, p. 119; "Vita Latina," sheet 47ᵗ. Both these authorities fix the date of the challenge on the 6th of March, but this is a blunder, for the event must have necessarily taken place later in the month.

The Compagnacci were gathered together at one of their accustomed banquets. Dressed in silken attire, and feasting on delicate viands and excellent wines, they consulted on the matter, and decided to do their utmost to bring the ordeal to pass. "If Savonarola enters the fire," they said, "he will undoubtedly be burnt; if he refuses to enter it, he will lose all credit with his followers; we shall have an opportunity of rousing a tumult, and during the tumult shall be able to seize on his person." Some of them, indeed, hoped to have a chance of killing him.[1] They accordingly applied to the Signory and found its members perfectly willing not only to help, but even to assume the direction of their shameful plot.[2] For they caused the disputed "Conclusions"[3] to be transcribed by the Government notary, and publicly invited the signatures of all who wished to maintain or contest them by the ordeal of fire.

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[1] It has been asserted by some writers that the challenge was first given by Savonarola, but this is absolutely untrue. The history of this ordeal by fire has been misrepresented by all modern and most of the old writers. We believe that we have finally succeeded in disentangling the real facts of the case by consulting the "Vita Latina," Burlamacchi, Pico, Nardi, Cambi, &c.; but, above all, the second book of Frà Benedetto's "Vulnera diligentis," and the "Giornate," iii. and iv. of Lorenzo Violi. Both these men were eye-witnesses of the scene, and their testimony must therefore be considered worthy of credence. By the aid of their writings and original documents we are enabled to throw fresh light on this hitherto obscure episode of Savonarola's career. *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, docs. xvi. and xvii.

[2] According to the printed version of the Trial, Savonarola openly avowed that he did his utmost to restrain Frà Domenico; and adds that, had he been allowed to preach, he would have shown that the truth of his "Conclusions" could be proved by different means.

It was truly monstrous that the chief authorities of the State should take so active a part in this affair; but no scruples withheld them from seeking to achieve their design. Nor was it difficult of achievement, for Frà Domenico was no longer to be kept in check by any power on earth, and instantly appending his name to the document, almost prayed to be allowed to go through the ordeal.[4] But it proved very difficult to induce the

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[1] *Vide* Burlamacchi and Cerretani. The latter chronicler gives a detailed account of the banquets held by the Compagnacci.

[2] The evidence of Violi and Frà Bennedetto proves that the ordeal by fire was undoubtedly desired and contrived by the Compagnacci and the Signory. Frà Benedetto concludes with these words: "And it was their purpose, by this device, to place Frà Hieronimo in a position to be easily killed by his adversaries before the close of the trial, or rather before there should be time for a miracle to take effect, *et tamen*, that they might be able to feign ignorance and innocence" ("Vulnera diligentis," bk. ii. chap. ix.). And Violi plainly says that the Compagnacci had arranged "with the Barefooted Friars, who were adversaries (of Savonarola) from envy, that one of their community, named Frà Francesco della Puglia, should preach against the doctrines of Frà Hieronimo; and therefore they had sent him to Santa Croce to preach in public, and say, &c." ("Giornata," iii.). *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, docs. xvi. and xvii.

[3] The "Conclusions," which have been often published, are these: "Ecclesia Dei indiget renovatione; flagellabitur, renovabitur. Florentia, quoque, post flagella renovabitur et prosperabitur. Infideles convertentur ad Christum. Haec, autem omnia erunt temporibus nostris. Excommunicatio nuper lata contra Rev. Patrem nostrum fratrem Hieronymum, nulla est. Non observantes eam, non peccant." *Vide* Padre Marchese, "Documenti," doc. xxiv.

[4] *Vide* Padre Marchese, doc. xxiv; and Lupi, doc. vi.

Franciscan, who had first started the scandalous business, to do the same. He presented himself to the Signory on the 28th of March, with another written declaration to the effect that—"although aware of his inferiority to Frà Girolamo in doctrine and goodness, he was ready to go through the fire with him; but that with Frà Domenico he had no concern." He would present some one else to pass the ordeal with the latter, and, in fact, he proposed Frà Giuliano Rondinelli, who did not appear, however, at the Palace.[1] Then it was whispered about that in no case would they enter the fire; that it was only intended to burn a few friars of St. Mark's in order to crush Savonarola, and that if this plan failed, some way would be found to quash the affair altogether.[2] These assurances were given by the Signory as well as by the Compagnacci. All that could be settled after much insistence was that the Franciscan should sign a declaration to the effect that he would pass through the fire with Frà Girolamo, if the latter wished to make the trial, and expressly adding that this was done *at the desire and request of the Magnificent Signory*.[3] As regarded going through the ordeal with Frà Domenico, it was only on the 30th of March, and with great reluctance, that Rondinelli could be persuaded to sign the challenge; even then he added the explicit avowal "that he would enter the fire, although certain that he should be burnt; and only for his soul's salvation." This wretched monk was a mere tool in the hands of the savage Compagnacci and the crafty Franciscan. Thus the Signory of Florence shamelessly agreed to organize an affair that was a degradation to the dignity of their office, and could only result in the shedding of innocent blood and the gravest danger to the Republic.[1]

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[1] *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xviii.

[2] Burlamacchi speaks at p. 133 of the assurances given to the Minorites: "And, in fact, it was promised to them that they should in no wise have to enter (the fire). Forasmuch as a few days before, there had been a supper at the Pitti Palace, whereat the chief enemies of the Friar were present; and it was here settled by them that the Minorites should not enter the fire, and that it would be enough for them that the friars of St. Mark's should appear in the Piazza, and Frà Domenico, whom they nicknamed the Fattoraccio (Bad Steward), be the only one to enter the fire." Violi ("Giornata," iii.) writes: "They egged on our Florentine, Frà Giuliano Rondinelli, a man rather of scant judgment than of much prudence, and whom our malicious Florentines found easier to work upon than the aforesaid Pugliese. . . . The Compagnacci and their leader, Doffo Spini, had promised this man that the trial by fire would not be made unless it suited them to allow it; and that it would be enough for this Friar Rondinelli to declare himself ready to enter the fire, but that, in fact and truth, he would not be required to do so." *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, docs. xvi. and xvii.

[3] "Ad instantiam et requisitionem Dominorum Florentinorum." So

The matter had gone so far, that on the same day (30th

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it is expressed in the instrument drawn up in the presence of the Signory, and published by Meier from the MS. in the "Achivio delle Riformagioni"; which had been already published during Savonarola's life. *Vide* also Padre Marchese, doc. xxiv.

As to the arguments employed to induce the Franciscan to face the ordeal, we find them repeatedly mentioned in Frà Benedetto's and Violi's works. Violi relates that Doffo Spini and many other idle fellows were accustomed to congregate in Simone Botticelli's workshop, "and while talking there on the subject of the Friar's death, Doffo Spini frequently said that they never meant to make the Franciscan go through the fire, and had given him their assurance to that effect; it was enough for them if he would keep up the game long enough for them to carry out their intent of putting an end to this business of the Friar." Violi had read this in the now perished chronicle of Simone Botticelli. *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xvi. Pico believes that the first suggestion of the plot came from Rome, "Pontificis pollicitationibus, ut creditum est" (chap. xv.). It is certain that the Arrabbiati and the Pope were in close and continual correspondence just then.

[1] On the 28th of March, 1498, Girolamo Benivieni wrote a letter to the priest of Cascina relating how the challenge to the ordeal by fire had proceeded from the preacher at Sta Croce, but how he had speedily withdrawn it, on finding that Frà Domenico was ready to accept it: "*Ipse nunc, fugam querit*, and says that he will not go through this ordeal, *nisi cum Frate Hieronymo*." Benivieni then adds: "The affair is in the hands of the Signory, and already many other persons are offering to enter the fire, with as much enthusiasm as if they were asked to a wedding." Nevertheless, he concludes, "I believe the affair will end in smoke, although it is urgently pushed on by those of St. Mark's, and by the endeavours (*et per la vià*) of the Archbishop's Vicar and of the Signory." *Vide* Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," 2nd ed. p. 216.

of March) a numerous Pratica was assembled to discuss the question of the ordeal by fire. Some of those present seemed heartily disgusted with the proceedings of the Signory; but the majority shared the views of Carlo Canigiani, who said: "That this was a Church affair, rather to be discussed in Rome where saints are canonized than in this palace, where it is fitter to treat of war and finance. Nevertheless, if it be really desired that the trial by fire should take place, let us at least consider whether it will be likely to crush discord or not." The same indifference was shown by other speakers, who all concluded by saying that everything must be referred to the Pope or the Vicar. Girolamo Rucellai said, in addition: "It seems to me that too much noise is made about this trial by fire; the only important point to us is to be rid of friars and non-friars, Arrabbiati and non-Arrabbiati, and to try to keep the citizens at peace. Nevertheless if it be deemed that this trial will restore concord in the city, let them go not only into the fire, but into the water, up in the air or down into the earth; meanwhile let our care be for the city, not for these monks." In real truth all were inclined for the ordeal, and Filippo Giugni, turning the whole thing into ridicule, cynically remarked: "To me, fire seems a strange thing, and I should be very unwilling to pass through it. A trial by water would be less dangerous, and if Frà Girolamo went through it without getting wet, I would certainly join in asking his pardon." And the gist of his speech was, that it would be best to be well rid of the Friar by consigning him without delay to the Pope. Giovanni Canacci, on the other hand, although likewise opposed to Savonarola, rose in great agitation, and almost with tears in his eyes, exclaimed: "When I hear such things as these said, I scarcely know whether life or death is most to be desired. I truly believe that if our forefathers, the founders of this city, could have divined that a like question would ever be discussed here, and that we were to become the jest and opprobrium of the whole world, they would have indignantly refused to have anything to do with us. And now our city is come to a worse pass than for many long years; and one sees that it is all in confusion. Wherefore I would implore your Excellencies to deliver our people from all this wretchedness at any cost, either by fire, air, water, or any means you choose. *Iterum:* I pray your Excellencies to put an end to these things in order that no misery nor hurt may befall our city."[1] The rest of the speakers all agreed in one way or another that the ordeal should take place. It was truly an afflicting sight to see the inhabitants of the most cultured and civilized city in the world assembled at their rulers' command to seriously discuss the advisability of lighting so barbarous a pyre. And it was still more afflicting to find that all were in favour of the ordeal, merely for the sake of concluding the affair, and without even the excuse of any genuine religious fanaticism.

The same evening the ordeal was decided upon with the utmost speed. Savonarola was to be exiled if one of the Dominicans should perish, and Frà Francesco, if one of the Minorites. It was also shamelessly decreed that in case both the champions were consumed, the Dominicans alone should be punished. But if the ordeal should not take place, the party who prevented it would be exiled, or both parties, if both were equally unwilling to face it.[1] Accordingly, the trial by fire was no longer to be evaded, and the Signory, after first abetting, now almost insisted upon it. The Pope was entirely with them in the matter, but in his official communications, through Bonsi, with the Ten, whom he knew to be Savonarola's friends, he refused his consent to the ordeal, and even feigned to disapprove of it. Nor was he altogether insincere, for it was only natural that he should hesitate, in the impossibility, at that distance, of foretelling the final result.[2] Savonarola, meanwhile, was inflamed with indignation against these foes whose diabolical plots and party-passions were disguised under a semblance of religious zeal. He was also persuaded that the Minorite friars would never have the courage to pass through the fire, for he knew that they were reluctantly obeying the suggestions of the Arrabbiati. He desired and, in truth, did his utmost to prevent the experiment, and discerned that he would have a better chance of succeeding if one of his disciples came forward in his stead. Most certainly, had Savonarola presented himself as champion, his enemies would have done all in their power to have him burnt, either alone or at the price of another innocent life. Nevertheless—such are the contradictions of the human mind—he had a secret belief, that if the trial were really made, it would end triumphantly for him, and, accordingly, did not put forth all his energy to prevent it. He told himself that Frà Domenico's daring ardour must undoubtedly be inspired by God. In fact, according to his theories, it was neither strange nor difficult to conceive that the Lord would perform a miracle in order to confound the Arrabbiati and establish the truth of the new doctrine.[1] He had frequently declared to the people that his words would be confirmed by supernatural evidence :[2] the moment for this seemed at hand, hence the general and almost frantic eagerness to witness the result of the ordeal. The Piagnoni were even more anxious for it than the rest, for they hoped and believed that when the crisis came their Master would be unable to refrain from entering the fire himself, and that a miracle would be accomplished.[3]

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[1] Only a very imperfect summary has been preserved of this lengthy discussion. Of the first speeches we have only given a hasty sketch; but have reported Canacci's words almost as they stand in the text ("Florentine Archives," cl. ii. series 5, file 131. Also "Consulte e Pratiche," cod. 66, p. 161). The latter collection has been published in full by Signor Lupi. In Nerli's "Commentarii," bk. iv., we find Canacci's words reported as follows: "That it would be sufficient, in order not to expose the two friars to the peril of being burnt in the fire, to throw them into a tub of water, even of tepid water, that the shock might be slighter; and if they came forth dry, they would have performed a supernatural miracle." Canacci, however, was more disposed to tears than to mirth; it was Giugni who laughed. Nerli has thus jumbled both speeches in one.

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[1] *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xviii. The decree threatened exile to Savonarola and Frà Domenico on the one side, to Frà Francesco and Frà Lorenzo Corsi on the other, it being still uncertain who the champions would be.

[2] The very mild protests of the Pope prove nothing to us. It was impossible for him to give his official support to a trial undertaken for the purpose of deciding whether his Brief of excommunication were valid or invalid, and whether the Church were in need of reform. But on the other hand, what might not be the consequence if either the Franciscan or both the friars should be burnt? Nevertheless, had Alexander really objected to the ordeal, he could have instantly prevented it, by ordering the Franciscans to withdraw their challenge. Bonsi had actually suggested that the Pope should fulfil his promise of absolving Savonarola from excommunication, and thus prevent the experiment. But the Pope refused to do this (Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," p. 134 and fol.). And it has been ascertained from the documents of Savonarola's trial that the Archbishop's vicar was one of the hottest instigators of the projected ordeal; and that after the event the Pope was most delighted, and showered praises and favours on the Florentines (Gherardi, *loc. cit.*, and G. F. Pico, "Vita," &c., chap. xv.). Burlamacchi states (p. 123) that the Pope feigned to object to it, fearing "that if the thing succeeded he might lose the triple crown;" but that his letter reached Florence too late. The same is said in the "Vita Latina," sheet 48^t. We cannot discover that this letter arrived at all, and do not believe that it was ever despatched.

Nothing else was spoken of in Florence, and although Savonarola disapproved of the trial, and opposed it as far as was possible, he secretly exulted in Frà Domenico's zeal, almost rejoicing to see how all things combined to render the ordeal an absolute necessity. Besides, there were the visions of Frà Silvestro, who declared that he had beheld the guardian angels of Frà Girolamo and Frà Domenico, and been assured by them that the latter would go through the flames unhurt.[1] We also know Savonarola's blind faith in Silvestro's visions. All this, joined to Frà Domenico's genuine enthusiasm, which was communicated to others with almost lightning speed, stirred the monks of St. Mark's and their friends to the highest pitch of excitement. On the 1st of April Savonarola summoned his trustiest adherents to St. Mark's, and preached them a short sermon, in which he described the real state of affairs, whereupon his hearers declared with one voice their readiness to enter the fire.[2] Two days later, in fact, the friars addressed a letter to the Pope, saying that about three hundred of their number, and many laymen, were prepared to pass through the fire in defence of their Master's doctrines.[3] Accordingly, being thus pressed on all sides, Savonarola sent in the list of their names to the Signory, with a declaration to the effect that he would depute one of his monks to meet every Minorite brother who came forward, and adding that if the trial should really take place, he was persuaded that it would result in the triumph of his followers.[4]

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[1] *Vide* one of Savonarola's discourses of which mention is made farther on.

[2] This was also repeated in his letters to the princes.

[3] *Vide* in the "Florence Archives" the Records of the Medici before they became the reigning House. File 69 contains letters from Leonardo Strozzi to the parish priest of Cascina, of which some passages have been already published by Mons. Perrens (vol. i., appendix, p. 492). One of these letters, dated 5th of April, 1498 (c. 18), contains these words : "I know that a thousand rumours will have reached you, and that you will be anxious to know the truth ; I mean concerning this affair of the Friar, for hardly anything else is spoken of."

At the same time he brought out a printed exposition of his theories—that was practically a reply to the accusations which were then being heaped upon him. In this he said: "I have too great a work on hand to stoop to join in these wretched disputes. If the adversaries who first provoked us, and then sought a thousand excuses, would publicly bind themselves to put to the issue by this test the decision of our cause and of the reform of the Church, I would no longer hesitate to enter the fire, and should feel assured of passing through it unharmed. But if it be their intent to prove by fire the validity of the sentence of excommunication, let them rather reply to the arguments we have brought forward. Would they, perhaps, combat our prophecies by fire? Yet we neither compel nor exhort any man to believe in them more than he feel able. We only exhort all to lead righteous lives, and for this the fire of charity and the miracle of faith are required; all the rest is of no avail. Our adversaries, by whom this thing has been instigated, declare that they will assuredly perish, thereby confessing that they are their own murderers. We, on the contrary, have been provoked to this trial and forced to accept it, because the honour of God and of religion is at stake. Those who feel truly inspired by the Lord will certainly issue unhurt from the flames, if the experiment should verily take place, of which we are by no means assured. As to me, I reserve myself for a greater work, for which I shall ever be ready to lay down my life. The time will come when the Lord shall vouchsafe supernatural signs and tokens; but this certainly cannot be at the command or at the pleasure of man. For the present let it suffice ye to see that, by sending some of our brethren, we shall be equally exposed to the wrath of the people in case the Lord should not allow them to pass through the fire unhurt." [1]

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[1] This was proved by the documents of Savonarola's and Frà Domenico's trials.

[2] Burlamacchi, p. 124, and the "Vita Latina," at sheet 49.

[3] *Vide* the letter dated 3rd of April at p. 137 of Gherardi's "Nuovi Documenti." The friars state that not only they, *pene trecenti*, but also a great number of the people, *numerosa populi caterva utriusque sexus*, were ready to pass the ordeal.

[4] *Vide* the "Vita Latina," Burlamacchi, and the pamphlet quoted farther on.

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[1] "Risposta di Frate Hieronimo . . . a certe obiectioni facte circa lo experimento dello entrare nel fuoco per la verità da lui predicata." It was published, without date, during Savonarola's life, together with the con

Frà Domenico's[1] enthusiasm was beginning to convince not only Savonarola himself, but even the most distrustful, that God had really appointed him to this work. Men's minds were increasingly inflamed. Piagnoni and Arrabbiati awaited the day of the trial with equal anxiety, though for different ends. Men, women, and children continued to propose themselves as champions; and although, in many cases, this was empty bravado, others came forward in all sincerity. On the 2nd of April Frà Malatesta Sacramoro and Frà Roberto Salviati went to subscribe their names as champions of St. Mark's, alleging that they too had received a call from the Lord. Thereupon, to ensure greater publicity, the convention was officially given to the world in print, with all the signatures of the opposing factions.[2] The Ten, hitherto invariably well-disposed to Savonarola, sent these papers to Rome, with a full and exact account of all that had occurred, and again requested the Pontiff's consent to the ordeal, which, in appearance at least, he still disapproved.[3]

Finally the 6th of April was fixed for this singular contest. Frà Domenico and Frà Giuliano Rondinelli were the two champions chosen by common accord. For many days past the doors of St. Mark's had been closed, and the brethren absorbed in continual prayer. On the evening of the 5th, however, they received a message from the Signory to the effect that the trial was postponed to the

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tract signed by those who had volunteered to enter the fire, the whole forming a pamphlet entitled, "Conclusiones rationibus ac signes supernaturalibus probande." Undated. The autograph draft of the "Risposta" is in the codex of San Marco, sheet 168. *Vide* also the documents of the Trial in the Appendix to the Italian edition.

[1] *Vide* the before-quoted documents of Savonarola's trial.

[2] In one of the letters we have quoted from Leonardo Strozzi to the parish priest of Cascina (dated 5th of March, but evidently in mistake for the 5th of April), we find these words: "A reprint has been brought out to-day of the same Conclusions (*sic*), with the signatures of those friars added on to them," &c. (File 69, sheet 19).

[3] *Vide* the letter of the Ten, in Padre Marchese, *loc cit.*; doc. xxiv.

7th of April. The cause of this change was unknown; but some said that the Signory was awaiting a prohibitory Brief from Rome[1] in order to have an excuse for putting a stop to the whole thing. The government, in fact, was already beginning to hesitate, fearing to have gone too far. For it had never anticipated finding so much resolution in the monks of St. Mark's, or so much poltroonery in the Minorites, who now insisted that some pledges should be given them as to the manner in which they were to pass through the fire unscathed. Accordingly, on the following day, 6th of April, a new decree was issued to modify that of the 30th of March, proclaiming that, "In the event of Frà Domenico being consumed, Frà Girolamo is to quit the Florentine territory within the space of three hours. . . ."[2] No allusion was made to the Minorite friars since it was intended in any case to ensure their safety, and especially since Rondinelli had declared his conviction that he should perish if he entered the fire. On the same day Savonarola delivered another brief address, warmly exhorting all the faithful to be instant in prayer.

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[1] Another of Strozzi's letters to the priest of Cascina, dated 6th of April, 1498, runs as follows: "I believe we may expect that a Brief or some other hindrance will come to us from Rome: on the part of those men [*i.e., of the friars of St. Mark*] all was and is arranged; and if it [the trial] takes place, which I can scarce believe now, their arrangements will be as fine a sight as a miracle. Frà Jeronimo preached this morning in St. Mark's, and again earnestly proffered, or rather promised, a most evident miracle, and replied to the numerous objections which are, or might be made, and above all to those who pretend to say that this miracle will be wrought by diabolical aid or by magic arts, for which this would be a fine opportunity; and that even if this miracle should not be done now (although they be prepared for it) others will be speedily performed; and, if not before, certainly without fail after the turning of the key. The which will soon come about, and great and marvellous things be declared." *Vide* the letter in the aforesaid File 69 of the Medici Archives, at sheet 20, published by Perrens, vol. i., appendix, p. 493. The same things are confirmed in the "Vita Latina" at sheet 48; and in Burlamacchi, p. 123.

[2] Florence Archives. "Deliberazioni dei Signori e Collegi." Register 100, sheet 33^t. This deliberation is entitled, "Contra fratrem Hieronymum." *Vide* Appendix, doc. xviii.

The 7th of April came, but not the expected Brief from Rome;[1] and all Florence was panting for the novel sight that, as it now seemed, must inevitably take place. Everything was prepared for it, and every one hoped to make it serve his own ends: the Compagnacci and Arrabbiati sought an opportunity for despatching the Friar; the Minorites to find some excuse for escaping the danger; the Signory were ready to favour any plan that might be hurtful to Savonarola; and the Piagnoni hoped that the ordeal would establish their triumph. Thus, public passions being more and more heated, the two parties decided to come to the Piazza with armed escorts in order to secure their safety in the event of a riot.[2] Even the Signory were extremely uneasy, and after ordering the platform to be constructed, took every kind of precaution as if in dread of a revolt. Only three inlets to the Piazza were to be left open, and these guarded by armed men; no citizen was to come armed, and neither women nor children were to be admitted. The palace was filled with the Friar's adversaries, the city gates were to be kept closed, and the troops, stationed in different parts of the territory, prohibited under pain of death from leaving their posts, save by express command of the Signory, and bidden to obey no orders to the contrary even from the Ten.[3] Further, to prevent either of the two parties from disturbing the peace on the Piazza, Francesco Gualterotti and Giovan Battista Ridolfi were charged to keep watch over the friars of St. Mark's, Piero degli Alberti and Tommaso Antinori over the Minorites.[1] And Savonarola was so distrustful of his adversaries' good faith that, on the morning of the appointed day, he sent Francesco Davanzati to the palace to implore the Ten, who still remained faithful to him, to take measures to prevent either of the champions from shirking the ordeal and leaving his competitor alone in the flames. He therefore requested that the pyre should be lighted on the one side, while the friars entered it from the other, and that the torch should then be applied to close the way behind them.[2] He likewise entreated that the ordeal might take place before the dinner-hour, so that the minds of his followers might be clear and unobscured.[3] While the final preparations were being made on the Piazza, he celebrated high mass in St. Mark's, afterwards delivered a short discourse to the assembled people, and even now at the last hour was unable to conceal his doubts. "I cannot assure ye that the trial will be made, since the matter depends in no wise on ourselves; but this I can tell ye, that if it really take place, victory will certainly be on our side. O Lord, we felt in no need of miraculous proofs in order to believe the truth; but we have been provoked to this trial, and could not fail to stand up for our honour. We are certain that the evil one will not be able to turn this thing to the hurt of Thy honour or against Thy will, wherefore we go forth to combat for Thee; but our adversaries worship another God, inasmuch as their works are too diverse from ours. O Lord, this people desires nought save to serve Thee. Wilt thou serve the Lord, O my people?"[1] Hereupon all signified their assent in a loud voice. Savonarola then recommended his male hearers to offer up prayers in the Church, while he prepared his friars to march to the Piazza, and the women to remain in fervent devotion until the ordeal was over. At that moment the mace-bearers of the Signory came to announce that all was in readiness, and the friars of St. Mark's immediately set forth in procession.[2]

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[1] We have already said that, according to the "Vita Latina" (sheet 49^t) and Burlamacchi (p. 123), this Brief was despatched subsequently to the event; but that we have not discovered it, and cannot believe that it was ever sent at all. It was entirely fictitious.

[2] Burlamacchi, p. 130: "Inasmuch as it was well known that the adversaries fully intended to make an end of the Father Frà Girolamo in the Piazza!" And Frà Benedetto states ("Vulnera diligentis," bk. ii. chap. ix) that they meant to stir up some extravagant dispute among the people, so that a riot might ensue, and then, during this disturbance, the adverse party would be able to kill Frà Hieronymo and some of his faithful disciples.

[3] *Vide* one of Somenzi's letters (7th of April, 1498) given in Del Lungo's work, *loc. cit.*, doc. xxxix.

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[1] Frà Benedetto, "Vulnera diligentis." *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xvii.

[2] *Vide* among the depositions or examinations of the accused, the evidence given by Francesco Davanzati.

[3] Savonarola's own words, in the discourse mentioned farther on, are as follows: "They wished the affair to take place at the 20th hour" (*i.e.* in the afternoon), "but I refused in order that the friars might be sober-minded."

They marched slowly, two and two, numbering about two hundred in all, and with a crucifix borne aloft in front. Frà Domenico followed, arrayed in a cope of fiery red velvet, and bearing a great cross in his hand. He was accompanied by a deacon and sub-deacon; his head was erect, his countenance calm. After him came Savonarola, carrying the Host with Frà Francesco Salviati on one side, and Frà Malatesta Sacramoro on the other. Behind them marched a great multitude of people bearing lighted torches, and chanting the Psalm: *Exurgat Deus et dissipentur inimici eius.*[3] On nearing the Piazza, towards the 21st hour of the day,[4] they passed two by two between the armed men guarding the ends of the streets; and directly they appeared among the crowd already awaiting them on the Piazza, all joined in their chants with such tremendous vigour as almost to shake the earth.[1] There was an innumerable throng; it seemed as though all the inhabitants of the city were gathered together; all the windows of the houses round the Square, all balconies and roofs were crowded with spectators; many children were clinging to railings, or perched upon columns and statues, in order to see the sight; some were even hanging from the walls, and had occupied their posts since the break of day.

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[1] "Esortazione fatta al popolo in San Marco il di 7 Aprile, 1498." It is given at the end of the Sermons on Exodus.

[2] "Esortazione," ea.; Burlamacchi, p. 129.

[3] "Vita Latina," sheet 50ᵗ and fol.; Burlamacchi, p. 129 and fol. *Vide* also in Appendix to the Italian edition (docs. xvi. and xvii.) the accounts given by Violi, who was with Savonarola at the time, and by Frà Benedetto, who describes the ordeal at length in chaps. vi.—x., bk. ii. of the "Vulnera diligentis."

[4] Nardi says: "towards the 18th hour"; but we follow the accounts of Violi, who was actually present.

The Loggia[2] of the Signory had been divided in two by a partition: the Minorites occupied the half nearest the palace; while the Dominicans were stationed round a little altar that had been erected in the other.[3] Having placed the Sacrament on this altar, Frà Domenico knelt before it, absorbed in prayer; while his companions stood about him in silence. A guard of three hundred infantry was drawn up in front of the Loggia, under the command of Marcuccio Salviati, composed of valiant soldiers, all staunch adherents of the Convent of St. Mark's.[4] But under the Tetto de' Pisani, several hundred of the Compagnacci stood at arms, with Doffo Spini at their head; and in front, and about the palace were five hundred of the Signory's guards, commanded by Giovacchino della Vecchia, in addition to the soldiers posted at the openings of the streets.[5] Thus the Piazza was held by about a thousand men, prepared to attack Savonarola at a moment's notice; yet he contemplated his dangerous position with the utmost serenity, and quietly turned his eyes towards the platform already piled with bundles of wood. This strange erection was about eighty feet in length, and projected across the Piazza from the Marzocco[1] in the direction of the Tetto de' Pisani.[2] It was about ten feet wide at the base, two and a half in height, and covered with earth and bricks. On this substratum the combustibles—wood, gunpowder, oil, pitch, and resin, were stacked in two banks, with a space, about two feet wide, left between for the passage of the rival champions.[3] All was prepared; the friars had only to come forth, and the torch would be laid to the pile. Up to this moment Savonarola had temporized and done his best to prevent the ordeal, while the Minorites, on the contrary, had dared him to it, and hurried it on; but in sight of the pile ready to be fired, the *rôles* were exchanged. Stirred by the presence of the crowd, the solemn chants of his friars, and the truly heroic enthusiasm of Frà Domenico, who, after earnest prayer, showed the utmost eagerness to enter the flames, Savonarola was now firmly convinced that the Lord would come to his disciple's aid, and accordingly desired to end all delay. But neither Francesco di Puglia, who had challenged the ordeal, nor Giuliano Rondinelli, who was to face it, had as yet appeared under the Loggia, but were tarrying in the palace, in secret debate with the Signory. The latter, instead of coming down to the Ringhiera, to witness the solemn drama that was shortly to begin, continued their discussions, and were apparently uncertain what course to adopt. And while all were waiting for the Minorite, and for the signal from the Signory, the members of the

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[1] Burlamacchi, p. 130.

[2] Now known as the Loggia dei Lanzi, and also as the Loggia dell' Orgagna.

[3] Burlamacchi, p. 130; Violi's and Frà Benedetto's accounts in the Appendix to the Italian edition, docs. xvi. and xvii.

[4] Now long destroyed, and its site occupied by a private house. It stands at right angles with the Loggia dei Lanzi.

[5] *Vide* Burlamacchi, Violi, and Frà Benedetto.

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[1] *I.e.*, the marble lion, then standing on the doorsteps of the palace, now replaced by one of bronze, made from a cast of the original, which was transported elsewhere.

[2] The Tetto de' Pisani was opposite the palace, and in modern times served as a post office, until pulled down, about twenty years ago, to make room for Palazzo Lawison.

[3] Burlamacchi, Violi, Frà Benedetto.

Government shamelessly sent to ask the Dominicans why they did not begin. Frà Domenico trembled with rage, and Savonarola replied that the Signory would do well to hurry the matter on, and no longer to keep the people in suspense.[1]

Then, the Minorites, being driven to the wall, began to put forth numerous pretexts for delay. With the aid of Piero degli Alberti, a bitter enemy to Savonarola, and deputed to preside over the ordeal, they caused it to be noised about that as Savonarola might have cast a magic spell over Domenico's red cope, that vestment must consequently be removed. The champion and his master both replied that a written contract had been made and subscribed, to prevent all disputes; that they had no belief in spells, and would leave their opponents to resort to them. Nevertheless, the demand was so strenuously urged, that Frà Domenico yielded to it, and removed his cope. Thereupon, the Minorites alleged fresh pretexts, declaring that the friar's robes might likewise be enchanted; and again Frà Domenico gave way, and showed his readiness to exchange clothes with any one of his companions. He was accordingly led into the palace, and after being entirely stripped, was clad in the robes of the Dominican brother, Alessandro Strozzi.[2] On returning to the Piazza, he was next forbidden to stand near Savonarola, lest the latter might re-enchant him; and by his Prior's request, Frà Domenico submitted to being surrounded by the Minorites.[3] During this crisis, his patience equalled his courage; and in his great yearning to pass through the fire, he was ready to concede every point.

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[1] *Vide* the writers before quoted, and the documents of Frà Domenico's trial.

[2] Burlamacchi and Viola relate that when Strozzi was sent for, he believed that he too would have to enter the flames; and accordingly showed signs of great joy, and craved Savonarola's blessing.

[3] Frà Benedetto, Burlamacchi, and Violi.

Nevertheless, the champion of the opposite party still lingered in the palace with Francesco da Puglia, and had not yet appeared.[1] Savonarola was already becoming uneasy at this; and his suspicions were increased by the consultation going on between the citizens and the Minorites, and the manifest favour shown to the latter. The persons appointed to preside over the trial invariably sided with those friars, and let them do as they pleased; accordingly, Savonarola sent another pressing message to the palace in order to put an end to the suspense. But at the same moment, the two Minorities asked and obtained another private interview with the Signory. What passed between them is unknown, but it now became increasingly evident that the whole business of the ordeal was no more than a cunningly arranged trick to entrap Savonarola and the community of St. Mark's.[2]

The patience of the multitude was now coming to an end. All had been assembled in the Piazza for many hours; the greater part of them were fasting since the dawn, and almost infuriated by the weariness of fruitless expectation. Hoarse murmurs arose on every side, followed by seditious cries; and the Arrabbiati, who had been eagerly watching for this moment instantly tried to profit by it. A groom in the service of Giovanni Manetti succeeded in exciting a riot, and suddenly all the Piazza was in a tumult. Many of the outlets being closed, the people found themselves surrounded and hedged in; and accordingly made a rush for the palace. This seems to have been the moment fixed by the Arrabbiati for laying violent hands on the Friar, and making an end of him on the spot. They attempted to do so, in fact; but Salviati concentrated his men in front of the Loggia, and tracing a line on the ground with his sword, exclaimed: "Whoever dares to cross this line shall taste the steel of Marcuccio Salviati;" and so resolute was his tone that no one dared to press forward.[1] At the same time, as it chanced, the foreign troops of the Signory, bewildered by the suddenness of the tumult, and seeing the people surging towards the palace,[2] energetically drove them back.

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[1] Frà Benedetto, *op. cit.*

[2] Frà Benedetto and Violi relate these particulars with great minuteness, and Burlamacchi gives a shorter account of them at p. 133 and fol.

Thereupon, order being apparently restored, the people were quieted, and more eager than before to witness the ordeal; but the Signory were increasingly perplexed. Then came a tremendous storm shower with thunder and lightning; so that many thought this would naturally put a stop to everything.[3] But in their thirst for the promised spectacle, the people never stirred; the rain ceased as suddenly as it had begun, and all remained in the same state of uncertainty. The Minorite friar was still invisible; and his companions began to raise fresh objections. They insisted that Frà Domenico should relinquish the crucifix he held in his hand, and he immediately let it go, saying that he would enter the fire bearing the Host instead. But this led to fresh and fiercer dispute, the Minorites declaring that he wished to destroy the consecrated wafer. But now Frà Domenico began to lose patience, and refused to give way, maintaining with Savonarola, that, in any case, only the accidental husk would be consumed, the substance of the sacrament remaining intact; and quoted the arguments of many theologians to this effect.[1] On meeting with some contradiction at last, his adversaries assailed Savonarola with still greater vehemence, in the hope of creating fresh delay. While they were disputing, the evening began to close in, and the puzzled Signory took advantage of this to proclaim that it was now impossible for the ordeal to take place.[2]

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[1] Burlamacchi and Frà Benedetto.

[2] The following words of Frà Benedetto, in his often quoted "Vulnera diligentis,' are specially worthy of note: "But let this grand secret be known to you, that only a few days after the attempted ordeal, many persons sought the spiritual superior of the city of Florence, for the purpose of asking and obtaining absolution, inasmuch as those persons had intended to kill the Prophet with their own hands (*manibus*) on the day of the ordeal. And, if thou wouldst be better assured of this, go and question M. Bartolommeo Redditi on the matter, for he is still living, and heard of the affair from the aforesaid superior's lips, and has borne, and continues to bear, truthful witness to this fact." *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xvii.

[3] Frà Benedetto.

The indignation of the people then passed all bounds, and, as no one exactly knew whose was the blame, most of them accused Savonarola: even the Piagnoni declared that he ought to have entered the fire alone, if none would go with him, for the sake of giving a final and indisputable proof of his supernatural power. And then the Arrabbiati and the Signory caused it to be rumoured about, that his fraud had been unmasked; that after provoking the trial, he had refused to pass through the flames, and similar falsehoods; while the Minorites impudently claimed the victory, although their champion had remained concealed in the palace, without so much as daring to glance at the pyre prepared for him.[3] Accordingly the whole city rang with menacing cries against Savonarola and St. Mark's.

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[1] Burlamacchi, Viola, Frà Benedetto. Frà Domenico deposed at his trial that he refused to yield this point, because Frà Silvestro had beheld their angels in a vision, and been told by them that he (Frà Domenico was to enter the fire with the Host.

[2] Nardi says that the rain prevented the ordeal, and many other writers subsequently repeated the statement; but Violi, Burlamacchi, and Frà Benedetto prove beyond doubt that it was forbidden by special order of the Signory. In the "Archivio Storico Italiano," series iii. vol. xiii. pp. 366–375, Prof. A. Conti has published a narrative of the controversy with the Minorite friars, and of the ordeal by fire, written by Padre Dionisio Pulinari, who had compiled it from the "Cronache" of Frà Mariano di Firenze, an eye-witness of the event.

[3] "They put on the face of a harlot, for, without blushing in the least, they went about saying that the victory was theirs, and wrote letters to all to the like effect" (Frà Benedetto, Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xvii.) *Vide* also Violi (Appendix to the Italian edition), the "Vita Latina," and Burlamacchi.

The Dominicans had a hard struggle to regain the Convent in safety, although escorted by the soldiers of Marcuccio Salviati, who, surrounding Savonarola and Frà Domenico with a band of his bravest men, courageously protected them, sword in hand, from the insults of an infuriated mob, egged on by the Compagnacci.[1]

On finally reaching the church, where the female congregation still knelt in prayer, Savonarola mounted the pulpit, and gave a brief summary of all that had occurred, while the Piazza outside was still echoing with the mad yells of his foes.[2] Then, having dismissed his hearers, he withdrew to his cell, overcome with a grief too deep for words.

The Minorites, on the contrary, were exultant; and afterwards the Signory assigned them, for twenty years, a pension of sixty lire, payable every 7th of April, *in reward for their services on that day.* Nevertheless, the first time they sent to demand the sum, the Camarlingo of the Bank was so enraged by their baseness, that in paying out the money, he exclaimed: "Here, take the price of the blood ye betrayed!"[3]

The Signory must have incurred considerable expense in preparations for this strange and fatal ordeal. There is a memorandum to the effect that 662 *lire*, 15*s*., 8*d*. were paid for combustibles and in wages to men who worked by torch-light as well as all day. An additional sum of 111 *lire* was spent on food and drink for the numerous guards and citizens employed in various ways on that day. There were also other incidental expenses.[4]

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[1] Frà Benedetto, Burlamacchi, and the "Vita Latina."

[2] Ibid.

[3] This anecdote is given in Burlamacchi, and in a great number of manuscripts also containing a report of the decree ordaining the pension, which has been published by Perrens, vol. ii. p. 513, doc. xx.

[4] *Vide* Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," 2nd ed. p. 221 and 271.

As we shall presently see, Briefs soon poured in from Rome filled with praises and promises of reward for the attempt that the Pope had not only feigned to disapprove, but even to censure.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ATTACK AND DEFENCE OF THE CONVENT; SAVONAROLA AND HIS TWO COMPANIONS ARE LED TO PRISON.

(April 8, 9, 1498.)

THE ordeal by fire, or rather the plot contrived on that day by the Arrabbiati, had produced the desired effect. The whole city was now turned against Frà Girolamo and his monks. It was an unpardonable offence in the eyes of the populace that neither he nor his disciple should have entered the fire, even without the Franciscan, in order to silence his enemies by a miracle. The Piagnoni could not follow all the subtle distinctions drawn by their chief, as to the time not being ripe, on not tempting the Lord, and on the question of the good or bad faith of his adversaries; they therefore began for the first time to doubt his supernatural power, and to be disposed to give ear to the reports and calumnies of the Arrabbiati. The latter displayed incredible activity in these days, held continual interviews with the Signory and the Canons of the Duomo, and were clearly seen to be on the point of dealing some new and decisive blow. At the same time, the more sagacious of the Friar's adherents, who might have foreseen and frustrated the enemies' designs, were too weak in numbers and influence to oppose any effectual resistance. Hence they were insulted on all sides as hypocrites and ranting impostors, and could not show themselves without danger in the streets.[1]

In this state of things some of the popular party, recognizing the premonitory signs of a terrible storm, took counsel among themselves, and proposed to fly to arms so as to have the advantage of dealing the first blow. But all Savonarola's staunchest disciples, and Francesco Valori in particular, energetically opposed the plan, saying that they must not be the first to shed their fellow-citizens' blood, nor the first to dye their hands in it. The majority were won over to this view, but many of the others were greatly enraged, and indeed Luca degli Albizzi, one of the most eager to resort to arms, hastened to leave Florence, saying: "If we are not to come to blows, every one is justified in providing for his own safety."

The morning of the 8th of April, Palm Sunday, passed quietly; but it was easy for an observant eye to discern that this tranquillity was only the sullen calm that precedes a storm, and that it was a marvel no startling event had yet occurred. Savonarola preached in St. Mark's, but his sermon was very short and sad; he offered his body as a sacrifice to God, and declared his readiness to face death for the good of his flock. Mournfully, but with much composure, he took leave of his people, and in giving them his benediction seemed to feel that he was addressing them for the last time.[2]

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[1] Nardi, i. p. 149; "Vita Latina;" Burlamacchi, p. 136; Frà Benedetto, "Cedrus Libani."

[2] Nardi, i. p. 150. On this subject the same writer remarks: "This man was always so true to himself that he never showed signs of dismay in any of his tribulations or dangers." And he pronounced this judgment even at the time of Savonarola's trial, regarding which we shall presently see what he has to say.

Later in the day the Piagnoni went to St. Mark's while vespers were going on, and then set out towards the Duomo, where a sermon was about to be delivered by Frà Mariano degli Ughi, the friar who had offered to brave the ordeal together with Frà Malatesta and Frà Domenico. But they were repeatedly pelted with stones by the way, and encountered groups of Arrabbiati, whose exultant demeanour seemed to say: "Our turn has come at last!" They saw others hurling stones at the windows of Andrea Cambini, one of Savonarola's adherents. On reaching the Duomo, they found many of the benches already crowded with people; but the Compagnacci had gathered round the door, addressing insults to all who entered the church, and telling them there would be no sermon. The Piagnoni hotly rejoined, that it would certainly be given; one word led to another, and the Compagnacci instantly unsheathed their swords and began to lay about them; made a rush upon a certain Lando Sassolini, and although they inflicted no wound upon him, their violence sufficed to raise a disturbance throughout the city.[1] The Friar's adherents then hurried to their homes to procure arms, while a portion of their adversaries held the corners of the streets, and all the rest marched through the city, crying: "*To St. Mark's, to St. Mark's, fire in hand!*" They assembled on the Piazza of the Signory, and when their numbers had sufficiently increased, moved in the direction of the convent, brandishing their weapons and uttering fierce cries. On the way they caught sight of a certain man, named Pecori, who was quietly walking to the Church of the Santissima Annunziata, singing psalms as he went; and immediately some of them rushed after him, crying: "Does the hypocrite still dare to mumble!" And overtaking him on the steps of the Innocenti,[1] they slew him on the spot. A poor spectacle maker, hearing the great noise in the street, came out with his slippers in his hand, and while trying to persuade the people to be quiet, was killed by a sword thrust in his head.[2] Others shared the same fate; and in this way, infuriated by the taste of blood, the mob poured into the Square of St. Mark. Finding the church thronged with the people who had attended vespers, and were still engaged in prayer, they hurled a dense shower of stones through the door; whereat a general panic ensued, the women shrieked loudly, and all took to flight. In a moment the church was emptied, its doors, as well as those of the convent, were locked and barred; and no one remained within save the few citizens who were bent on defending St. Mark's.[3]

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[1] Burlamacchi, p. 135 and fol.; Giovanni Cambi, "Storie," in the "Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani," vol. xxi. p. 119. *Vide* also the depositions of the accused in the Appendix to the Italian edition.

Although barely thirty in number,[4] these comprised some of the most devoted of Savonarola's adherents; the men who had escorted him to the pulpit, and were ever prepared to risk their life in his service. For some days past they had known that the convent was in danger; and accordingly eight or ten of them had always come to guard it by night. Without the knowledge of Savonarola or Frà Domenico, whom they knew to be averse to all deeds of violence, they had, by the suggestion of Frà Silvestro and Frà Francesco de' Medici, secretly deposited a store of arms in a cell beneath the cloister.[1] Here were some twelve breastplates, and as many helmets; eighteen halberts, five or six crossbows, shields of different kinds, four or five harquebusses, a barrel of powder, and leaden bullets,[2] and even, as it would seem, two small mortars.[3] Francesco Davanzati, who had furnished almost all these weapons, and was then in the convent, brought out and distributed them to those best able to use them. Assisted by Baldo Inghirlami, he directed the defence for some time, placing guards at the weakest points, and giving the necessary orders.[4] About sixteen of the friars took arms,[5] and foremost among them were Frà Luca, son of Andrea della Robbia, and our Frà Benedetto.[6] It was a strange sight to see some of these men,[7] with breastplates over their Dominican robes and helmets on their heads, brandishing enormous halberts and speeding through the cloister, with shouts of *Viva Cristo*, to call their companions to arms.

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[1] The Foundling Hospital, near the Church of the Annunziata.

[2] Burlamacchi, p. 136.

[3] "Vita Latina;" Burlamacchi; Frà Benedetto, "Cedrus Libani." The attack on the church and convent of St. Mark is minutely described in this poem. An account of the facts is also to be gleaned from the depositions of the accused.

[4] All this is related in great detail by Burlamacchi and Frà Benedetto, but they considerably exaggerate the numbers of those concerned in the fray. The exact figures are to be ascertained from the depositions of the accused prisoners, and the documents of Frà Domenico's trial.

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[1] *Vide* in Appendix to the Italian edition the examination of Francesco Davanzati, of Luca della Robbia, Bartolommeo Mei, and Francesco dei Medici. *Vide* also the trial of the three Friars.

[2] Frà Domenico, who confessed nothing that was not strictly true, says that he had neither known nor suspected the existence of any arms in the convent, save of the few weapons employed for Savonarola's protection when he walked abroad. "Most assuredly," he said, "these arms were never brought in by the order, or even with the knowledge of Padre Frà Hieronymo, neither were they introduced by my will, since *I* always laughed at the idea of such a thing" (*i.e.*, the idea of offering armed resistance). And this statement was confirmed by the depositions of the other prisoners.

[3] Some allusion was made to these two small mortars in the examination of Lionello Boni and Bartolommeo Mei: the former replied that he had heard something said about them, and the other thought he had had a sight of them. Certain modern writers, finding the word *artillery* used by some old writers in accounts of these events, believed that there were cannon at St. Mark's. This, as we shall see, was merely one of the exaggerations diffused at the time. In those days all firearms were designated as artillery, and all the artillery used in the convent consisted of four or five muskets, since the mortars, if there were any, were never employed.

[4] *Vide* the examination of Niccolò Calzaiuolo in Appendix to the Italian edition.

[5] This was not ascertained clearly from the friars' own depositions, but from those of the other prisoners.

[6] *Vide* his examination in Appendix to the Italian edition.

[7] Frà Benedetto, "Cedrus Libani."

Savonarola was deeply grieved by this, and Frà Domenico went about imploring all to cast aside their weapons. "They must not stain their hands in blood; they must not disobey the precepts of the gospel, nor their superior's commands."[1] So he cried, but all was in vain, for at that moment the furious yells outside rose to a deafening pitch, and more determined attacks were made on the gates. It was then that Savonarola resolved to end the fruitless and painful struggle by the sacrifice of his own safety; so, assuming his priest's vestments, and taking a cross in his hand, he said to his companions: "Suffer me to go forth, since through me *orta est haec tempestas*;" and wished to surrender himself to his enemies at once.[2] But he was met by universal cries of despair; friars and laymen pressed round him with tears and supplications. "No! do not leave us! you will be torn to pieces; and what would become of us without you?"[3] When he saw his most trusted friends barring the way before him, he turned about and bade all follow him to the church. First of all he carried the Host in procession through the cloisters; then led the way to the choir, and reminded them that prayer was the only weapon to be employed by ministers of religion, whereupon all fell on their knees before the consecrated wafer, and intoned the chant: *Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine.* Some had rested their weapons against the wall, others still grasped them, and only a few remained on guard at the main entrances.[1]

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[1] *Vide* Frà Domenico's trial in Appendix to the Italian edition.

urlamacchi, p. 136. *Vide* also, in Appendix to the Italian edition, the examination of Alessandro Pucci, and the trial of Frà Silvestro: all the latter's depositions in Savonarola's favour are thoroughly to be credited, since, in order to save himself, he generally sought to blacken his superior.

[3] Burlamacchi, and the trial of Frà Silvestro.

It was now about the twenty-second hour (*i.e.*, two hours before sundown), the throng on the Piazza had increased, the assailants were encouraged by meeting with no resistance, and the Signory's guards were coming to their aid. At this moment the macebearers appeared to proclaim the Signory's decree that all in the convent were to lay down their arms, and that Savonarola was sentenced to exile, and ordered to quit the Florentine territory within twelve hours' time.[2] Most of those who heard this announcement regarded it as a device of the enemy.[3] It was difficult to credit that the Signory could order the attacked, who were making scarcely any defence, to lay down their arms while the assailants, who were the sole authors of the disturbance, and in far greater numbers, were not only left unmolested, but supplied with reinforcements! Nevertheless, the proclamation decided several to obtain safe conducts and hurry away.

Francesco Valori was one of those who left the convent at this juncture. Although warned by Francesco Davanzati and others that he was exposing himself to serious risk, he insisted on being let down over the wall at the back. Seeing the feeble resistance offered by the inmates of the convent, while the enemies' forces were continually on the increase, he wished to repair to his own house, collect his adherents, and make a better fight in the streets. But his premises were quickly surrounded by the mob, who threatened to set them on fire; and a macebearer brought him a summons to appear before the

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[1] Examinations of the accused; the trials of the three Friars; Frà Benedetto, "Cedrus Libani;" Burlamacchi.

[2] This proclamation is given in the Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xix.

[3] Frà Domenico declared at his trial, that, to the very last, he refused to believe that the Signory positively supported the foes of St. Mark's.

Signory without delay. Being unprepared for resistance at the moment, he promptly obeyed, in the belief that his personal influence and authority would prevail with the magistrates, and make them ashamed of what they had done. Turning at once towards the Palace, with the macebearer at his side, he pushed through the crowd with the assured bearing and composed air of a man convinced of his own innocence, and unaccustomed to shrink from danger. But he had hardly passed the corner of San Procolo, when a group of Ridolfi and Tornabuoni, kinsmen of those he had caused to be condemned to death the previous year, fell upon him sword in hand, and killed him on the spot. Thus a public hurt was avenged by a private hate, and this was the miserable end of the valiant and honest citizen who had ever been Savonarola's most powerful ally. Meanwhile, startled by the noise, his wife had flown to the window in great alarm, and while listening, bewildered, to the cries of Valori and his assassins, a bolt, from a crossbow in the crowd below, reunited her to her slaughtered husband. In another instant the maddened populace had stormed the house, pillaged it and set it on fire. As a piteous sequel to this tragedy, a sleeping babe, one of Valori's grandchildren, was accidentally smothered under a mattress while the rabble were pillaging the beds. Yet the Signory allowed these outrages to pass with impunity, and never took the least notice of them.[1] On the same day the houses of Andrea Cambini were sacked and burnt, and those of Paolo Antonio Soderini and Giov. Battista Ridolfi were only saved from the popular fury by the presence of their friends and of some of the Signory's macebearers.[2]

[1] *Vide* the "Vita Latina," Burlamacchi, p. 187; Nardi, i., p. 151; Luca Landucci, "Diario," p. 171, and the other chroniclers of the period. *Vide* also the "Nuovi Documenti su G. Savonarola," published by Signor A. Portioli in the "Archivio Storico Lombardo," year i., No. iii.

[2] *Vide* the authors quoted in the preceding note, and the letters to the Duke of Milan, in the Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xx.

Meanwhile night was falling, and the siege of the convent being carried on with desperate ferocity. Some fired the gates, while others had successfully scaled the walls on the Sapienza side,[1] and made their way into the cloisters. After sacking the infirmary and the cells, they all penetrated to the sacristy sword in hand, and broke open the door leading to the choir. When the friars, who were kneeling there in prayer, found themselves thus suddenly attacked, they were naturally stirred to self-defence. Seizing the burning torches, and crucifixes of metal and wood, they belaboured their assailants with so much energy that the latter fled in dismay, believing for a moment that a band of angels had come to the defence of the convent.[2]

Then the other monks, who had laid down their arms at Savonarola's behest, again resumed the defence, and there was more skirmishing in the cloisters and corridors. At the same time the great bell of the convent, called the Piagnona, tolled forth the alarm; both besiegers and besieged fought with greater fury; all was clamour and confusion, cries of despair, and clashing of steel. This was the moment when Baldo Inghirlami and Francesco Davanzati dealt such vigorous blows, and that Frà Luca d'Andrea della Robbia chased the foes through the cloisters, sword in hand. Frà Benedetto and a few others mounted on the roof, and repeatedly drove back the enemy with a furious hail of stones and tiles. Several of the monks fired their muskets with good effect inside the church, and a certain Frà Enrico, a young, fair-haired, handsome German, particularly distinguished himself by his prowess. At the first beginning of the struggle he had courageously sallied out into the midst of the mob, and possessed himself of the weapon he wielded so valiantly, accompanying each stroke with the cry: "*Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine.*"[1]

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[1] That is, from the street afterwards called Via del Maglio, and now Via La Marmora.

[2] This incident is given by Burlamacchi and the other biographers, and also in almost all the depositions of the accused. Frà Benedetto describes the scene as follows in chap. viii. of his "Cedrus Libani":

E figli del Profeta eran, cantando
Le litanie, avanti al Sacramento,
Di punto in punto il martirio espettando.
Et io, che fui presente a tal spavento,
Per voler che 'l Profeta non perissi
Più presto d'esser morto ero contento.
Forza fu li inimici s'assalissi,
Da venti el più, e con doppieri accesi,
A ciò foco per foco si sentissi.
E' volti degli avversi furno incesi,
E le lor teste percosse a tal forma,
Che furno espulsi, et alcun morti e presi.
E discacciâr si pochi si gran torma,
Cosa divina fu e non umana. . . .

At this juncture the victory was decidedly with St. Mark's, and its defenders were exulting in their success, when a fresh edict of the Signory was proclaimed, declaring all rebels who did not forsake the convent within an hour.[2] Thereupon several more demanded safe conducts and departed, thus farther diminishing the too scanty garrison.[3] And there being no longer any doubt as to the Signory's intention of crushing St. Mark's, even the remnant of the defenders lost hope and courage, and were already beginning to give way. Savonarola and many of his brethren still remained in the choir, offering up prayers, which were interrupted from time to time by the cries of the injured or the piteous wail of the dying. Among the latter was a youth of the Panciatichi House, who was borne, fatally wounded, to the steps of the high altar, and there, amid volleys of harquebuss shots, received the communion from Frà Domenico, and joyfully drew his last breath in the friar's arms, after kissing the crucifix, and exclaiming: *Ecce quam bonum et quam iucundum habitare fratres in unum!* [1]

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[1] Frà Benedetto, "Cedrus Libani," loc. cit.:

> Et io con alcun altri, l'alta scorza
> Del tetto della chiesa gittavamo,
> Che dell' uscirne a' nemici fu forza.
> Lor arme e scuti a furia rompavamo,
> Che lapide paria dal ciel piovessi:
> Così lor forze indrieto tenavamo.

These incidents are mentioned by Burlamacchi, and in the examinations of several of the prisoners.

[2] *Vide* the edict in Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xix.

[3] Shortly after, another edict (Appendix, doc. xix.) declared to be rebels all who went to St. Mark's, but this did not prevent the guards of the Signory from continuing to help the assailants.

Night had now come, and the monks, exhausted with hunger and agitation, devoured some dry figs one of their companions had brought. Suddenly the defence was resumed; louder cries were heard and fresh volleys of shot. In the pulpit from which Savonarola had so frequently inculcated the doctrine of peace, Frà Enrico, the German, had now taken his stand and was firing his harquebuse with fatal effect. The smoke became so dense that it was necessary to break the windows in order to escape suffocation; and thereupon long tongues of flame poured into the church from the burning doors. The German and another defender retreated into the choir, and, clambering upon the high altar, planted their harquebusses beside the great crucifix, and continued their fire.[2]

Savonarola was overwhelmed with grief by this waste of life, in his cause, but was powerless to prevent it. No attention being paid to his protests, he again raised the Host, and commanded his friars to follow him. Traversing the dormitory, he had conducted nearly all to the Greek library, when he caught sight of Frà Benedetto rushing downstairs, maddened with fury and fully armed to con-front the assailants at close quarters. Laying his hand on his disciple's shoulder, he gave him a severe glance, and said, in a tone of earnest reproof: "Frà Benedetto, throw down those weapons and take up the cross; I never intended my brethren to shed blood."[1] And the monk humbled himself at his master's feet, laid aside his arms, and followed him to the library with the rest.

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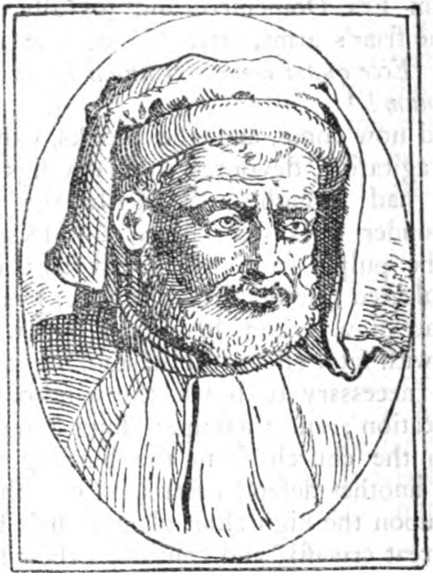
[1] "Vita Latina," Burlamacchi, p. 139. Also in the depositions of the accused.

[2] Burlamacchi. The depositions of Frà Luca della Robbia, of Girolamo Gini and others, in Appendix to the Italian edition.



MICHELOZZO MICHELOZZI.

A final and still more threatening decree was now issued by the Signory against all who continued to resist, commanding Savonarola, Frà Domenico, and Frà Silvestro to present themselves at the palace without delay, and giving their word that no harm should be offered them. Frà Domenico insisted on seeing the order in writing, and the heralds, not having it with them, went back to fetch it. Meanwhile Savonarola had deposited the sacrament in the hall of the library beneath the noble arches of Michelozzi's vault, and, collecting the friars around him, addressed them for the last time in these memorable words : "My beloved children, in the presence of God, in the presence of the consecrated wafer, with our enemies already in the convent, I confirm the truth of my doctrines. All that I have said hath come to me from God, and He is my witness in heaven that I speak no lie. I had not foreseen that all the city would so quickly turn against me ; nevertheless, may the Lord's will be done. My last exhortation to ye is this : let faith, prayer, and patience be your weapons. I leave ye with anguish and grief, to give myself into my enemies' hands. I know not whether they will take my life, but certain am I that, once dead, I shall be able to succour ye in heaven, far better than it hath been granted me to help ye on earth. Take comfort, embrace the cross, and by it shall ye find the way of salvation." [1]

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[1] Frà Benedetto ("Cedrus Libani," chap. viii.) concludes his account of the incident thus:

Allor cessò ciascun di far ripari,
Ogn' uom di far difesu allora restò,
Per non voler al Santo esser discari.

The invaders were now masters of almost the whole of the convent, and Gioacchino della Vecchia, captain of the palace guard, threatened to knock down the walls with his guns, unless the orders of the Signory were obeyed. Frà Malatesta Sacramoro, the very man who, a few days before, had offered to walk through the fire, now played the part of Judas. He treated with the Compagnacci and persuaded them to present a written order, for which they sent an urgent request to the Signory, while Savonarola again confessed to Frà Domenico and took the sacrament from his hands,[2] in preparation for their common surrender. As for their companion, Frà Silvestro, he had hidden himself, and in the confusion was nowhere to be found.[1]

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[1] Frà Benedetto, "Cedrus Libani," chap. ix.

[2] Burlamacchi ; Frà Benedetto, "Cedrus Libani ; Violi, "Giornata," iv ; the depositions of the accused, and the letters to the Duke of Milan in Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xx.

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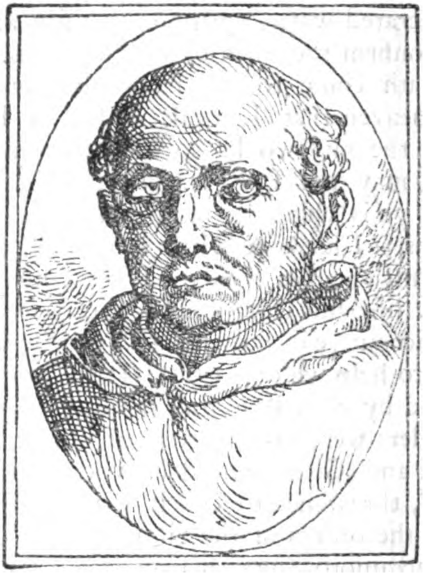
[1] Burlamacchi and other writers state that there was no doubt as to Frà Silvestro's concealment. But it has been impossible to find in any contemporary authority the confirmation of a similar fact first mentioned by Vasari and afterwards repeated by others: namely, that the celebrated painter Baccia della Porta, later known as Frà Bartolommeo, was in the convent at the time and hid himself through cowardice. This would seem scarcely credible: the resistance offered was less than was generally said; the greater part of the monks and many of the laymen remained passive and unarmed in deference to Savonarola's commands. Baccio may have possibly done the same. Frà Silvestro concealed himself in order to avoid arrest, but no search was made for Baccio della Porta. Nevertheless, for the sake of impartiality, it should be added, that, according to the depositions of the accused, it would seem that one of the laymen really hid himself; consequently, the tale told of Baccio della Porta (who only became a novice in 1500, and took the vows in 1501) may possibly be true. But throughout the documents and depositions of the different trials there is no mention of his name. Vasari, who belonged to a later period, and had no friendly feeling for Savonarola or St. Mark's, cannot be considered a safe authority on the subject. Hence we are inclined to consider his assertion unfounded.



FRÀ BARTOLOMMEO.

Just then a singular incident occurred. One of Savonarola's disciples, a certain Girolamo Gini, who had long yearned to assume the Dominican robe, had come to vespers that day, and, from the beginning of the riot energetically helped in the defence of the convent. When Savonarola ordered all to lay down their arms, this worthy artisan instantly obeyed, but nevertheless could not refrain from rushing through the cloisters and showing himself to the assailants, in his desire, as he confessed at his examination, to face death for the love of Jesus Christ. Having been wounded, he now appeared in the Greek library, with blood streaming from his head, and, kneeling at his master's feet, humbly prayed to be invested with the habit. And his request was granted on the spot.[1]

Savonarola was urged by some of his friends to consent to be lowered from the walls and seek safety in flight, since, if he once set foot in the palace, there was little chance of his ever leaving it alive. He hesitated and seemed on the point of adopting this sole means of escape, when Frà Malatesta turned on him and said: "Should not the shepherd lay down his life for his lambs?" These words appeared to touch him deeply, and he accordingly made no reply; but after kissing his brethren and folding them to his heart—this very Malatesta first of all—he deliberately gave himself up, together with his trusty and inseparable Frà Domenico, into the hands of the macebearers, who had returned from the Signory at that instant.[2] They had already surrounded him, when he turned once more to his friars and said : "My brethren, take heed not to doubt. The work of the Lord shall go forward without cease, and my death will but hasten it on." [1] No sooner were the two friars led down into the cloisters, than the mob pressed round them with ferocious yells of triumph. At this Frà Benedetto, who had hitherto followed them at a distance, could no longer restrain his anguish ; and pushing forward with tears and sobs, declared that he must go to prison with his master. But no one listened to him, for all were intoxicated with rage. The surging crowd bore Savonarola and Frà Domenico out into the Piazza of St. Mark's, and Frà Benedetto was left to his despair in the cloister. He tells us that so terrible an uproar was then heard, that all thought Savonarola had been slain on the spot.[2]

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[1] *Vide* his examination in Appendix to the Italian edition. He then said that this was no sudden impulse, inasmuch as for some time past he had left all his business in order to study and qualify himself for becoming a monk.

[2] Burlamacchi; Violi, "Giornata," iv. In the "Cedrus Libani," chap. ix., Frà Benedetto says:

El sangue iusto, o crudel, non dovevi
Conceder alle gente scellerate,
Che d'esser morto quel quasi 'l vedevi.
Parte di Juda furno tua pedate. . . .

The seventh hour of the night (one o'clock, ant.) had now struck. The macebearers had bound Savonarola, and the rabble pressed about him in a thick mass, like a stormy sea ; helmets, breastplates, swords, and spears glittered here and there in the dim light of lanterns and torches. All gazed on him with threatening mien, they flashed lanterns in his eyes, crying out : "Behold the true light!" they singed him with torches, saying : "Now give a turn to the key ;" they twisted his fingers, struck him, and tauntingly inquired : "Prophesy who it is that has buffeted thee." Their ferocity reached such a pitch, that his guards had great difficulty in protecting him with a fence of crossed spears and shields. The insults he endured by the way may be more easily imagined than described, and the mob continued to wreak their brutality on him until he had entered the palace. Even while in the act of passing through the postern door, one of the

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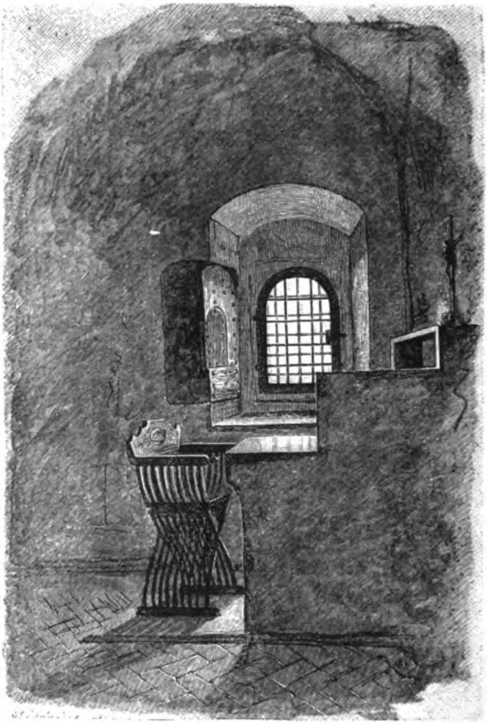
[1] Burlamacchi, p. 143.

[2] Burlamacchi, p. 143 ; Frà Benedetto, "Cedrus Libani," chap. x.



SAVONAROLA'S EMPTY CELL AT ST. MARK'S.

populace kicked him in the back and exclaimed: "This is the seat of his prophecies!"[1]

When the two prisoners were finally brought before the Gonfalonier, he asked whether they persisted in declaring that their words were divinely inspired; and on their replying in the affirmative, ordered them to be thrust into separate cells. Savonarola was placed in the Alberghettino (little hostelry), a small chamber in the bell-tower, in which Cosimo de' Medici had once suffered imprisonment, and where for the first time he found a little rest after the terrible events of the day. The same night his brother Alberto, who chanced to be in Florence, was arrested, but was soon set at liberty. The following day Frà Silvestro came out from his hiding-place, and was immediately betrayed by Sacramoro to the enemies, who had feasted all night on luxurious viands at the friars' humble board.[2]

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[1] Burlamacchi, p. 144, and the "Vita Latina." Frà Benedetto, loc. cit., after a minute description of these scenes, adds:

Tre mila in circa fu la gran canaglia,
Che menò, via il pastor com 'un 'agnello,
Per forza no, con persa lor battaglia.

And farther on he says:

Non so se tante grida è nell' Inferno,
Qual fu la notte quando quel menorno
A' Signor di Firenze a' quali el dierno.

[2] Burlamacchi, p. 144. The account of this day's work has been compiled from the "Vita Latina," the works of Burlamacchi and Pico, but more especially from the "Cedrus Libani" of Frà Benedetto, the interrogatories of the accused, the trials of the three friars, the decrees of the Signory, and the documents edited by Padre Marchese and others. The abundance of materials has increased instead of diminishing the difficulty of the task. All authorities give the same details of the event, but each in a different way, according to what they had seen or remembered, or as it best suited them to represent the facts. For it was often convenient to the accused to give an altered or diminished account of the part they had played. Only a laborious and most minute examination of documents has enabled us to arrive at what we believe to be a truthful statement of the facts derived from careful consultation of the evidence

Meanwhile, the Signory hastened to make known to Rome, Milan, and the other Courts all that had occurred on the evening of the 8th of April, colouring the facts in their own way and to suit the temper of the government they addressed. To the Florentine orator in France they gave a very summary sketch of the matter, ordering him to communicate it to no one. This was because they were aware of the king's friendship for Savonarola.[1] But they sent the minutest details to Bonsi in Rome, and commissioned him to obtain from the Pope a general absolution from all the censures they might have incurred, not only for their prolonged toleration of Savonarola's sermons, but also for having laid violent hands on ecclesiastics. They also begged to be authorized to sit in judgment on the friars, and at the same time seized the opportunity of asking for a speedy settlement of the question of Church tithes. It may be conceived with what eagerness the Pope replied to the Signory of Florence. He hastened to designate them as true sons of the Holy Church; gave them his full absolution and blessing; granted them the required authorization to examine, try, and torture the prisoners; praised all they had done; promised and sent to the city a plenary indulgence for the Easter octave in Santa Reparata; but insisted very strongly that on the conclusion of the trial the friars should be given into his hands to suffer the punishment they deserved. Nevertheless, he was lavish only of promises as regarded the Church tithes and all the rest. The Duke of Milan also sent special messengers with

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given by eyewitnesses. According to Somenzi, whose object it was to attenuate the importance of the riot, there were only twelve dead and twenty-five wounded. His letter was published in Professor del Lungo's work, loc. cit., document xl. *Vide* also Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xx.

[1] On the 9th of April they wrote to him thus: "You will communicate this letter to no one; it is solely for your private information" (Padre Marchese, loc. cit., doc. xxviii.).

letters of congratulation: expressed his desire to assist the Republic; urged the Signory to keep it united and quickly restore it to order; was ready to aid it in every emergency, and to surrender Pisa in a few days' time.[1]

But the best tidings for Savonarola's foes came from a most unexpected source. The latest letters from France brought the news that on the 7th of April, the day fixed for the ordeal by fire in Florence, Charles VIII. had died at Amboise. And his end had been wretched, even as Savonarola had so often predicted that it would be, in consequence of his abandonment of the Lord's work. Suddenly smitten by an apoplectic stroke, he had been carried into a most filthy hole;[2] and there, on a heap of straw, the King of France had drawn his last breath. But never was any prophecy more unfortunately fulfilled, nor with greater harm to the prophet. Savonarola lost in Charles his last and most powerful support, precisely when the only hope of safety lay in his help, and at the very moment when the monarch seemed again on the point of turning his thoughts to the affairs of Italy and the reform of the Church.[3] But, as we have already noted, all things now combined against the poor Friar; and no hope remained to him on earth.

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[1] *Vide* the brief dated 12th of April, in Gherardi's "Nuovi Documenti," doc. vi., p. 145 and fol.; and also various letters from Bonsi in Rome, and Pepi in Milan in the same work. *Vide* also Nardi, i. 154; Burlamacchi, "Vita Latina;" Padre Marchese, docs. xxv. and xxx. From Pepi's letters it would seem that Ludovico was not altogether pleased by what had occurred, fearing, in fact, that the Florentines would now be too completely under the thumb of Alexander VI. Pepi himself was still more displeased, for as a follower of Savonarola, he no longer knew what attitude to assume. Pope Alexander, however, was overjoyed, and on the 11th of April sent two other complimentary briefs to Francesco di Puglia and the Franciscans, lauding all they had done against Savonarola. They are to be found in Quétif, "Additiones," pp. 462–463.

[2] *Vide* Commines, "Mémoires," lib. viii. chap. xxv.: "Estoit le plus deshonneste lieu de leans car tout le monde y pissoit, et estoit rompue à l'entrée."

[3] Commines, "Mémoires," lib. viii. chap. xxv. *Vide* the passage quoted elsewhere in this volume. Even Guasconi, who was much at-

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attached to Savonarola, said, in announcing the death of King Charles to Mazzinghi: "And just when he was feeling the need of doing something, life has failed him." *Vide* his letter given in the examination of Mazzinghi, in Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxix. No. 12.

CHAPTER IX.

SAVONAROLA IS EXAMINED AND PUT TO THE QUESTION. THE MAGISTRATES OF THE REPUBLIC CONCOCT TWO FALSIFIED REPORTS OF HIS AVOWALS, BUT STILL FAIL TO PROVE HIS GUILT.

(April 9–25, 1498.)

THE day following the tumult was Holy Monday: the beginning of the week consecrated to the memory of our Redeemer's sacrifice, during which the people were accustomed to crowd round Savonarola in the greatest numbers, and in which he had always delivered his most impressive and eloquent sermons. Now, on the contrary, he was hidden in a dungeon, in the hands of the enemies, who were masters of the town.[1] An unusual activity was to be noticed in the Palace, a perpetual running to and fro of heralds and macebearers, searching in the name of the magistrates for all who were best known as partisans of the Friar and the popular government. Some, in defiance of the express prohibition, succeeded in escaping, while others gave themselves up. In this manner, besides

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[1] Landucci writes, at p. 171 of his "Diario": "And nothing more was done on the 9th day of April, 1498; weapons were at rest, but not tongues; hell seemed let loose; men were never weary of crying *traitor and thief.* As for saying a word in the Friar's favour, it was impossible; one would have been killed."

Savonarola and his two companions, Frà Domenico and Frà Silvestro, nineteen others, some monks and some laymen, were arrested, either for having taken part in the defence of the convent or as known and declared Piagnoni.[1] After the sack of St. Mark's the whole building was carefully searched from end to end, and Savonarola's cell in particular, in the hope of discovering papers that might be useful in concocting the evidence by which it was planned to destroy him. Meanwhile the brethren had withdrawn to the infirmary: where, after having tended the wounded and dying, not only of their own side but also of the attacking party, they erected an altar and engaged in prayer.[2] At the same time the Compagnacci collected all the weapons they found in the convent church, stacked them in a cart, carried them, still blood-stained, round the city and exhibited them to the people, crying: "Behold the miracles of St. Mark; behold the miracles of the Friar, and the tokens of his love for the people of Florence!"[3]

All this naturally had much effect on the multitude, who considered themselves defrauded and tricked, because no miracle had been wrought either on the day of the ordeal by fire, or at the storming of the convent. And the Signory, intent on striking the iron while it was hot, neglected no means of forwarding their purpose. A Pratica was assembled the same day to discuss the best mode of conducting the prisoners' examination. Their inquiries on this occasion plainly showed that they had not only resolved to break their sworn pledge of releasing Savonarola and his two companions, but were also determined to override the customs and even the laws of the Republic.

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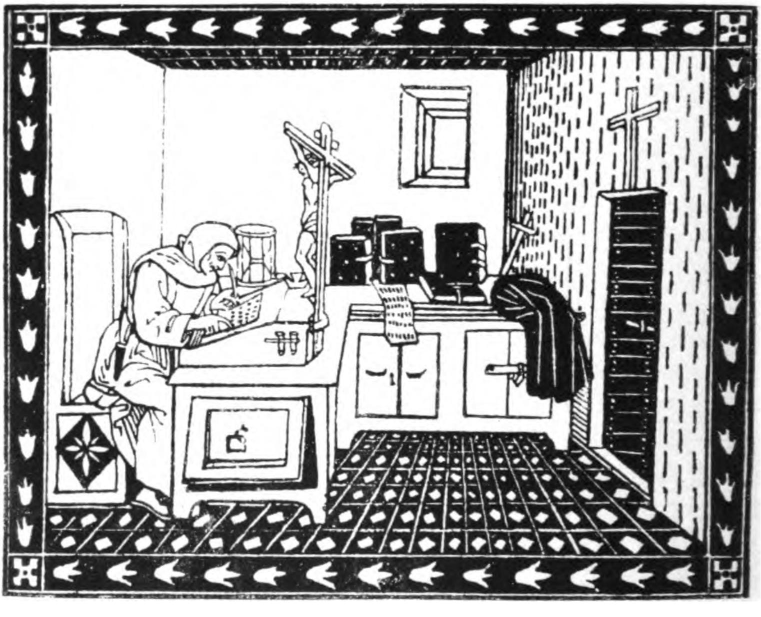
[1] *Vide* their interrogatories or examinations in Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxx.

[2] Burlamacchi, p. 144.

[3] Ibid., p. 145.



SAVONAROLA WRITING IN HIS CELL.

In fact, they first of all demanded "whether the three friars whom they had been obliged to seize, for the honour of the Republic, should be examined here in Florence, or sent to Rome in accordance with the Pontiff's request;"[1] and they next asked: "What should be decreed as to the functions of the actual Ten of Liberty and Eight of Guard?" Both these magistracies, and the first in particular, having always been favourable to Savonarola, this was a very important question; for, according to the law, it was the special function of the Eight to judge State offences. Hence the Signory wished both the Eight and the Ten to be changed before the expiration of their legal term of office, in order to ensure the election of men of their own party. This would be the only means of securing full liberty of action. We have no detailed report of the debate. Nothing but the briefest outline of the proceedings and the gist of the speeches made on the occasion have been preserved. Messer Guidantonio Vespucci, spokesman for the bench of the doctors of the law, who in the Pratica of the 14th of March had been the chief of Savonarola's opponents, was the first to rise to his feet. He instantly proposed: "That Frà Ieronimo should be privately examined by competent persons, so that when the trial was concluded, only such portions of it as their Excellencies thought fit need be made known to the public. That it would not be expedient to send the Friar to Rome, but merely to inform the Pope that he would be kept in safe custody. As to the magistrates of the Ten," he added, "some think that a new election should immediately be held; whereas others consider that the present men should continue in office until the expiration of their legal term. As to the Eight, it should be noted that their term is almost at an end."[1] Almost all the other speakers shared these views, but some went farther. Giuliano Mazzinghi, in fact, suggested that both the Eight and the Ten should at once be changed, "considering the temper of the men actually in office." Giovan Paolo Lotti had even the audacity to add that if the new magistrates should not prove suitable, they should be compelled to resign, in order that others might be elected in their stead. The majority were also agreed that it would be by no means advisable to publish the trial in full, "remembering," as Paolo Rucellai said, "that Cæsar refused to look on the writings of Pompey."[2]

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[1] *Vide* the Pratica in the Register previously quoted, at sheet 189 and fol., and in doc. viii. of Professor Lupi's published collection.

The gist of the matter was, that full powers were granted to the Government to make and unmake either of the two magistracies at will. The party of the Piagnoni was practically extinct, the Arrabbiati were supreme, and the Signory were now free to do as they chose. Accordingly they at once elected new councils of the Ten and the Eight, and made them take their places beside the men actually in office. Then, on the 11th of April, they appointed a special commission of seventeen examiners[3] to conduct the trial of the three friars, and with full power to use torture or any other means that might be found necessary to their purpose. The names of the commissioners chosen sufficed to prove with how little justice and impartiality the trial would be conducted. There was Giuliano Mazzinghi, who had suggested in the Pratica the immediate and unlawful dismissal from office of the Eight and the Ten; there was Piero degli Alberti, he that on the day of the ordeal had displayed such insolent and shameless animosity against Savonarola; there was Doffo Spini, the chief of the Compagnacci, principal author of all the machinations against him, and ringleader in the riot on Ascension Day, at the ordeal by fire and in the assault on the convent. Thus the very man who had so often employed assassins to attempt the Friar's life, and tried to kill him with his own hands in the streets of Florence, was now one of the new Council of Eight and member of the commission specially chosen to conduct the trial and pronounce the final sentence. His person was well known to Savonarola, who had frequently seen him with eyes blazing with ferocious vindictiveness, and with his dagger half drawn from its sheath, trying to force his way through the impenetrable barrier of friends whose lives were heroically devoted to their master's defence. And he now beheld this man draped in the official robe and playing the part of a judge, and immediately realized what humanity would be shown in the examination and what honesty in the verdict. The intention to violate all principles of law and justice was so plainly evident, even from the first, that one of the examiners indignantly threw up his appointment the moment after receiving it, declaring "that he would have no share in this homicide." [1]

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[1] The Eight were to go out of office at the end of April; but the Ten were to be in power for two months longer.

[2] *Vide* the previously quoted report of the Pratica held on the 9th of April, 1498.

[3] *Vide* in Appendix, doc. xxiii., the decree of the 11th of April, 1498, in the above-quoted register, No. 100, in the Florence Archives, at sheet 35. Authorities vary as to the number of examiners appointed. Nardi states that there were twelve, Pico fifteen, Burlamacchi sixteen; we have adhered to the indisputable evidence of the official decree.

From the outset innumerable illegalities were committed. The commission was appointed by a decree of the 11th of April to preside over a trial nominally begun on the 9th, with the assistance of two Florentine canons selected by order of the Pope, whose letter to that effect, as Violi observes, and likewise by the evidence of the official correspondence, could not possibly have arrived before the 14th. What is certain is that, after being interrogated on the night of his arrest—that is, between midnight on Palm Sunday, the 8th of April, and the morning of the 9th, Savonarola was taken the following day to the upper hall of the Bargello,[1] and after being again interrogated, threatened, and insulted, was roped to a pulley, and put to the question. He was hoisted some distance from the floor, then allowed to fall rapidly, and the rope being suddenly checked with a jerk, his arms were forced back until they described a half-circle, his muscles lacerated, and all his limbs quivering with pain. The torture of the rope and pulley, when slightly applied was by no means one of the most cruel, but could sometimes be used in a way to overcome the strongest frame and the firmest endurance. When continued for any length of time it invariably produced delirium, sometimes ending in death; consequently the sufferer could be made to confess anything. It was only a question of time.

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[1] In recounting this fact, Burlamacchi attributes the words to Francesco degli Albizzi, but this was a mistake, since Albizzi's name is on the list of examiners in the printed version of the trial. Bartolo Zati is the man whose name is included in the list formed on the 11th of April, but absent from that printed in the report of the trial. Thus the original number of seventeen examiners was reduced to sixteen.

Even in early youth Savonarola had been of delicate and sensitive fibre, and owing to continued austerities, prolonged vigils, and eight years of uninterrupted ministrations in the pulpit, he had become singularly ailing and nervous. Indeed for some time past he had been in a state of almost incessant suffering, and only seemed to live by the force of his will. All that he had undergone during these last days—peril, insult, and the pain of finding himself forsaken by all—had greatly increased his already morbid sensibility. In this state he was subjected to cruel and and unbearable torture! As was only to be expected, he soon began to rave; his replies lost all coherence,[1] and at last, as if despairing of himself, he cried in a voice that might have softened a stone, though with no effect upon his judges: *Tolle, tolle, Domine, animam meam.*[2] Well indeed for him had he died at that moment! His memory would have been spared many new calumnies, and his heart an endless series of novel pangs.

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[1] The palace of the Bargello was then next to the Custom House, and joined by it to that of the Signoria.

So far his enemies had extorted no avowals from him. On being taken down and again interrogated he reasserted the truth of his doctrines, and when requested to answer differently, exclaimed, "Ye tempt the Lord."[3] He was then supplied with writing materials, but the nature of his declarations caused the examiners first to conceal and then destroy the sheets, and to discard the idea of basing the trial on the prisoner's autograph confessions, as was required by the law. These few papers, of which no trace was preserved, may be considered as Savonarola's only authentic confession,[4] since, as we shall presently see, he was allowed to write nothing more with his own hand throughout the rest of his examination. On perceiving that nothing suited to their purpose could be extracted from his vague replies, they had him unbound and sent back to prison. Once in his cell, he knelt down and prayed for his executioners, crying: "O Lord, they know not what they do."[5]

The proceedings had now to be started afresh, new measures adopted; and the Signory lost no time in delay. They not only asked and obtained absolution from Rome for the imprisonment, examination, and torture of ecclesiastics, but permission to continue the same so long as they thought fit.[1] And meanwhile they summoned another Pratica to consult what reply should be made to the Pope as to sending the three friars to Rome after the trial. Almost all voted against giving up the prisoners, but suggested that the Pope should be kept in good humour by fair words, so that he might be induced to grant them the tithe on Church property.[2] Finally a commission was appointed in due legal form to draw up the case against the prisoners. But how was it to be drawn up? It was so hard to decide this capital point, that all proceedings were suspended on the 10th of April.[3] The people murmured impatiently at the delay, the Signory knew not what to do, and openly groaned over the uncertainty with their intimates. Seeing that, apart from his written replies, nothing but vague and contradictory words were to be extorted, even by torture, from Savonarola, how could he be condemned with any show of legality? The fabrication of entirely fictitious avowals would never be sanctioned by all the commissioners, added to which, a fraud of this kind would be liable to discovery and might have very serious consequences. It was then that a Florentine notary, Ser Ceccone di Ser Barone, said to one of the examiners who was making these complaints: "Where no real case exists, it is necessary to invent one."

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[1] "Inventum est item in posterioribus confessionum libellis obtestatum se vi tormentorum multa dixisse, et abalienari animo cum torqueretur" (Pico, p. 83). Several proofs of this are even to be gleaned from the trial.

[2] Burlamacchi, pp. 145–146; Pico, p. 77.

[3] "Vita Latina," Burlamacchi and Pico. See, too, in Appendix, docs. xxi. and xxii., and the narratives of Violi and Frà Benedetto.

[4] Hence the existence of a genuine *proces verbale* in the Friar's hand s altogether hypothetical. Much information will be found concerning the few papers he really wrote, and which were subsequently destroyed, in Violi's "Giornate" and the "Vulnera Diligentis" of Frà Benedetto.

[5] Burlamacchi and Pico.

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[1] *Vide* the brief of the 17th of April, 1498. and the letters of the Signory and their ambassador at pp. 154–155 of Gherardi's work. *Vide* also Padre Marchese, doc. xxx.

[2] Pratica of the 13th of April in the before-quoted Register, and in doc. ix. of Signor Lupi's published collection.

[3] So it would seem from the two editions of the trial published at the time, although we have the authority of several Codices to the effect that even on the 10th the examination of the accused was continued. The manuscript minutes of the trial underwent many arbitrary alterations.

And he added that he should not be afraid to find a way of doing it.[1]

This Ceccone had originally belonged to the Medicean party and been concerned in Piero's conspiracy, but on its discovery had sought refuge at St. Mark's, and found protection and safety with the monks. While there he feigned to be converted to religion, daily attended the sermon, and played the part of a Piagnone. But this did not prevent him from acting as a spy for Duke Ludovico, to whom he wrote letters in cypher, with full details of all that was going on in Florence.[2] He continued to pursue this career until Savonarola's incarceration, when, throwing off the mask, he not only showed himself a declared enemy of the Friar, but offered to draw up falsified depositions, altering the prisoner's replies, without too many verbal changes, in such a way as to facilitate his condemnation. He was known to be a sharp-witted man, quite capable of the work, and accordingly his offer was not only accepted, but he was promised the considerable reward of four hundred ducats in the event of his success. No attention was paid to the fact that as notary to the Signory he was legally unqualified to draw up the case.[3] But legality was now altogether discarded. Thus, on the 11th, a real beginning was made to the so-called trial, and the iniquitous mode in which the evidence was compiled proved the origin of many strange and contradictory opinions regarding Savonarola, and made it extremely difficult to disentangle truth from falsehood. Both indeed were so dexterously jumbled that it is often almost impossible to know what to believe.

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[1] Burlamacchi, p. 147. Detailed information concerning Ceccone may be found not only in all the biographers, both ancient and modern, but also in Violi's "Giornate" and the "Vulnera Diligentis" of Frà Benedetto, ii., chap. 20. There are documents in the Florence Archives proving that he had been employed in the Chancery of the Eight of Pratica until the expulsion of the Medici in 1494. After that his handwriting only reappears again in the minutes of the trials of April, 1498.

[2] *Vide* the authors previously quoted. It is possible that he was the *secret friend* frequently mentioned in Somenzi's letters to the Duke.

[3] Violi and Frà Benedetto speak with indignation of this illegal proceeding.

We have no means of ascertaining how many times Savonarola was put to the question, but more than a month was certainly employed in framing the various depositions, and throughout that period he was repeatedly subjected to prolonged and terrible torture. An eye-witness stated that in one day he beheld him suffer fourteen turns of the rack.[1] Pico and Burlamacchi add that when suspended from the rope, hot coals were applied to the soles of his feet; and that after interrogating him during this torment, his examiners wrote in their report that "he had confessed of his own accord, and under no physical restraint." So many writers are agreed that he sometimes gave way under torture, that we are compelled to believe it, although a great number of his followers make assertions to the contrary. But the very nature of the case affords a stronger argument for belief than any written testimony. How could a man of the Friar's delicate frame and sensitive nerves have the strength to withstand such fierce and prolonged agony, when at the first jerk of the cords he fell into delirium? The executioner himself declared that he had never seen any one so quickly and severely affected by torture. We may be certain, that even then, for all his racked limbs and harrowed soul, had he suddenly found himself in the pulpit, in presence of the assembled people, under the influence of a thousand kind and attentive eyes, he would have been his old self again, and energetically reasserted every article of his creed, even at the cost of uttering the last word with the last breath in his body. But, when forsaken by all, surrounded by the stony faces of his foes, who would not listen to him, could not understand, and only sought to expose him to fresh torture, how was he to find vigour to recapitulate, explain, and justify his visions and prophecies? His utterances at these times were mere ravings of delirium. And how could one, no longer conscious of what he said, be held responsible for his words? [1]

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[1] Lorenzo Violi, "Giornata," vi. *Vide* Appendix, docs. xxi. and xxii.

But the worst agony for Savonarola, and perhaps the most painful moment of his whole life, must have been when, after the first application of torture, he was left to silence and solitude in the tower cell. There, face to face with his own conscience, he must have been compelled to recognize that he was unable to withstand physical torment; that once bound to the rope, his mind would soon wander, and that he might be easily made to give any reply demanded of him. What was to be done? As soon as the torture became unbearable, he would have to yield upon some point or another. Which point should be the one chosen? The charges against him were to be classed under three heads: religion, politics, and prophecy. As to yielding on the first point, it was not to be thought of; death were a thousand times preferable. To abjure his politics would not only be vile, but might greatly endanger the cause of the nation and of freedom. Therefore, since he had to give way on some point, it must be regarding his prophecies and visions.

We have already had occasion to see how this question of his gift of prophecy had continually entangled Savonarola in a maze of sophistry through which it is extremely difficult to follow his steps. Now, therefore, in the loneliness of his cell, broken down by the first turns of the rack, and humiliated by his weakness of nerve, we may well believe that his imagination was more excited than before. Many of his reasonings at this time are recorded by Pico and Burlamacchi; but they are described in far greater detail by Violi and Frà Benedetto, who devoted half their lives to investigating and writing commentaries on the trial; and were so completely imbued with their master's sophisms, as well as with his ideas, that we frequently seem to hear his voice from their lips. All they tell us on this head, not only corresponds with all Savonarola's ideas and the whole course of his life, but even with words actually spoken and written by him during his imprisonment. Consequently their testimony commands our fullest belief.[1]

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[1] *Vide* Burlamacchi, p 145 and fol.; Pico, 33-34; Violi and Frà Benedetto in many passages of their before-quoted works.

He seems to have begun by recalling certain passages of St. Thomas Aquinas, in which it is laid down that it is by no means imperative to reveal the entire truth to perverse judges. Then, looking through the Bible, he found that Amos, Micah, Zechariah, and St. John the Baptist had sometimes denied that they were prophets, and given dubious replies; and remembering that Jesus Christ Himself had adopted this course, was it not allowable, nay fitting, for him to do the same? Nor was this the first time he had propounded this theory. After uttering some prophecy from the pulpit, he had often been heard to declare: "I am neither a prophet, nor the son of a prophet; I have never claimed to be a prophet." And, on proceeding, in a subsequent sermon, to explain these contradictory utterances, he would plunge into such a flood of allegorical interpretations and sophisms, that it was impossible to arrive at his real meaning. Naturally, therefore, the same man and the same contradictions are brought before us in the depositions made during the trial. Having always been allegorical and obscure concerning his gift of prophecy, we may imagine how much vaguer and more confused he became at this juncture, when purposely endeavouring to bewilder his judges.

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[1] Some of Savonarola's followers have written whole volumes on this theme. *Vide* Pico, chap. xvii.; Frà Benedetto, "Vulnera Diligentis," bk. ii. chap. xxi. and elsewhere, especially bk. iii., which is devoted solely to this subject, and the whole of the "Giornata" vi. of Lorenzo Violi *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, docs. xxi. and xxii.

It should also be remembered that the firmness and heroism of great men in asserting their special beliefs, are always the results of faith and truth; and we have seen that Savonarola's visions and prophecies were chiefly the outcome of what, despite its sincerity, must undoubtedly be considered a fanatic state of mind. Whence could he derive strength to maintain the truth of these things under physical torture that clouded his brain; when, in the depths of his spirit, the subject was always involved in a maze of superstition and sophistry? This was the weak point in Savonarola's life and character, the point on which his examiners harassed him with their fiercest torments, and forming, we must frankly allow, the least worthy part of his depositions. He says and unsays, affirms and denies; he could not speak clearly on a subject of which his own perception was so vague; he could not show strength where he was weakest, and was, in short, the miserable victim of his own hallucinations. On this question, therefore, what heroism could be expected or hoped from him?

The difficulty of forming an exact conception of Savonarola's mental attitude is enormously increased by our ignorance of his genuine replies. All that was extorted from him by torture, was transcribed more or less faithfully by Ser Ceccone, and then altered with diabolical cunning before being copied into the minutes. Sometimes a *yes* was turned into a *no*, or *vice versâ*; or again, whole paragraphs of considerable length were omitted. Certain phrases also were continually interpolated, as, for instance: *this was my hypocrisy; this was my pride; I did it for the sake of worldly glory*, and so forth.[1] The examiners themselves, their notary, and a considerable number of other citizens, all testified to this.[2] Lorenzo Violi, who was enabled to compare the original draft with the printed minutes of the trial, took note of several of these alterations.[3] In reading the Friar's depositions, one finds many perceptible gaps and many undoubted interpolations frequently clashing with the sense and even the grammar of the paragraph to which they have been added. It is plainly evident that when the examiners found that neither by threats, torture, nor forged reports would it be possible to establish Savonarola's guilt, they resolved to do their utmost to rob him of his followers' admiration and esteem.

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[1] Here is what Nardi says on this subject, in his "Storia di Firenze," i. p. 170: "And, in order that my own conscience may not charge me with the guilt of concealing the truth, I am constrained to say what was told me by a great and noble citizen, one of the examiners of the said Friars, who, as a determined enemy of theirs, was appointed to that office, and afterwards arrested with many other citizens on the return of the Medici to Florence. One day, being at his villa and questioning him, in reference to a certain subject, how things truly went at that trial, he candidly declared to me, in his wife's presence, that it was perfectly true that, *for a good purpose, somewhat had been omitted from and somewhat added to* the depositions of Frà Girolamo. These were the actual words of his reply; I know not if he spake truly, but I know that I report them truly, and therefore believe that I now note them down truly." *Vide* Burlamacchi, Violi, Pico, &c. Our narrative in general is based throughout on the authority of contemporary writers and original documents; but in this chapter we have been specially scrupulous, and the reader may be assured that almost every sentence of it is based on the evidence of some original document or author of the period.

[2] In 2nd ed. of the "Nuovi Documenti," Signor Gherardi publishes two letters from Pier Francesco de' Medici to the Rector of Caseina, who, like so many of Savonarola's former friends, had now turned against him. And, as Gherardi justly remarks, "even if there were no other proofs of how the depositions were falsified, these letters alone would suffice to show the impossibility of obtaining genuine reports from similar examiners."

The priest seems to have feared that he might be implicated on account of his former relations with Savonarola; and accordingly, in a letter dated the 25th of April, 1498, Pier Francesco writes to reassure him, bidding him fear nothing, inasmuch as, even if Savonarola should say anything to his hurt, it would not be inserted in the report. *Vide* Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," 2nd ed. p. 259-260.

[3] *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, docs. xxi. and xxii.

We have already said that the charges against him turned chiefly upon three points: his prophecies and visions, his religion, his politics; and how the first of the three was the weak point, that Savonarola had not the strength to maintain under torture. In spite of his sincere belief that he was not merely endowed with insight into the future, but was a true prophet in direct communication with the Lord, this belief was very different from the inspired faith in truth, religion, and freedom which gave him strength to suffer martyrdom with heroic calm. The first was but a confused and superstitious dream that he was unable to shake off during flights of visionary meditation or oratorical excitement when the affectionate glances of his flock served to inflame his imagination; but the dream vanished amid the stern realities of his dying moments. He himself lamented it, crying: "O Lord, Lord, Thou has taken from me the spirit of prophecy!"[1]

Nevertheless, when first interrogated before all the Commissioners, he had insisted on the truth of his visions, had referred to the Divine voice that had addressed him through the lips of an angel, and concluded by saying: "Leave this matter alone; for if it was of God, ye will receive manifest proofs of it; if of man, it will fall to the ground. Whether I be, or be not, a prophet is no concern of the State; and no man hath the right to condemn or judge the intentions of other men."[2] But when again put to torture, he first denied that he was a prophet and then reasserted his gift; and on the torture being resumed, began to make vague and allegorical replies, which, being continually altered by their reporter, became too confused to be often intelligible. But whenever the judges desisted from questioning him as to his visions, he ceased to reply in the character of a deluded prophet, and spoke as became an intrepid martyr in the cause of religion and freedom.

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[1] We shall see elsewhere under what circumstances he repeated these words.

[2] All this was omitted in the minutes of the trial, but included in the original draft examined by Violi. *Vide* "Giornata," vi., given in Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxi.

Accordingly, in the second stage of the trial, when Savonarola had to speak of *his mission*, he was worthy of himself, and unshaken by torture. He frankly reasserted his belief that the Church must first be scourged and then regenerated. "To forward this end," he said, "I preached things by which Christians might know the abominations committed in Rome, and might unite in forming a council, the which, if once assembled, would, as I hoped, lead to the degradation of many prelates and even of the Pope; and I should have sought to be present, and was determined, when there, to preach and do things of which I might be proud." And, proceeding in the same strain, he frequently repeated: "I purposed to achieve great deeds in Italy and beyond the borders." When asked if he had thought to become Pope, he replied: "No; for had I accomplished this work, I should have deemed myself higher than any Cardinal or Pope."[1] Now, if words such as these are to be found in Ser Ceccone's falsified reports, how can we doubt Savonarola's heroic courage in upholding his religious ideas?

He showed the same courage when interrogated on politics. In spite of additions and alterations, we see that his replies were very firm and explicit. He repeatedly and indignantly denied the charge of having extorted State secrets by means of the confessional. He often reiterated that he had never meddled with the government; had shown neither favour nor disfavour to any man; that he had spoken on the affairs of the State in general, but had left all details to the care of Valori, Soderini, and other experts. "My sole aim was to promote free government and all measures tending to its improvement." He also alluded to some of the principal laws he had proposed or intended to propose later, such as the election of a perpetual Gonfalonier; and there is a noteworthy passage in which he states that on finding reason to suspect that some of his trustiest friends were scheming to get the government entirely into their own hands, he had immediately begun to preach against tyranny and every limited form of government, "so that, willingly or unwillingly, those persons should be driven to favour the civil government." Therefore, whenever liberty was at stake, he had been restrained by no personal considerations, had not even yielded to beloved and faithful followers of his own, and now, under torture, remained still firmer than before. We have the clearest evidence of this, even in the falsified reports drawn up by Ceccone to compass the Friar's condemnation.

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[1] *Vide* Savonarola's first trial in Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxvi.

After subjecting him for eleven days to continual interrogatories and tortures, the Commissioners finally brought the examination to an end. But although it was conducted with so much illegality, and with so many ingenious falsehoods introduced into the depositions, the evidence proved insufficient for the end proposed; and the Signory were highly displeased with the mode in which the case had been managed. When writing to the Pope, who had complained of their slowness, they were obliged to explain that they had to do "with a man of most enduring body and sagacious wits, who, hardening himself against torture, had involved the truth in a thousand obscurities, and appeared determined, by his feigned sanctity, either to win lasting fame in future ages, or to suffer incarceration and death. Even by long and assiduous examination, continued for many days and with the aid of torture, we could barely extort anything from him, and we preferred not to reveal what he said, hoping to succeed in discovering the innermost windings of his mind." [1]

Throughout the whole course of the trial, Savonarola was undoubtedly consistent with his real self. As we have seen, intellect and superstition, lofty reasoning and vulgar sophistry, sublime heroism and, sometimes, unexpected weakness, were all combined in him, with, at bottom, a most noble, strong, and magnanimous character. It is true that he now maintains, now denies his gift of prophecy ; but when questioned on points into which both mind and heart had a clear insight, he showed an unconquerable force of resistance. Promises, threats, repeated tortures were alike unavailing ; even in delirium his will remained firm and unshaken. Therefore the Signory had good reason to be most dissatisfied with the trial, seeing, to their decided pain and mortification, that notwithstanding his prolonged tortures and the numerous changes introduced into his depositions, Savonarola's innocence became more and more apparent. The only advantage they had gained by their attempt was that of discrediting him in the eyes of his followers, and this at any rate was of no little importance. Once deprived of the popular favour, they might venture on condemning him, without any regard for law, justice, or for his own declarations of innocence.

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[1] "Nobis fuit res cum homine patientissimi corporis et sagacis animi, qui contra tormenta animum obdurasset, et veritatem multis tenebris continue involveret; quique videretur ad hoc eo consilio accessisse, ut aut simulata sanctitate æternum sibi nomen apud homines pareret, aut in carcerem et in mortem iret: multaque et assidua quæstione, multis diebus, per vim, vix pauca extorsimus; quæ nunc celare animus erat, donec omnia nobis paterent sui animi involucra" (Padre Marchese, doc. xxxiv., loc. cit., p. 185). It is true that the Signory spoke falsely in saying that Savonarola was *patientissimi corporis;* but it is strange that Padre Marchese should be enraged by the letter and call it injurious to Savonarola, when, on the contrary, it is a splendid monument to his honour and fame. And it may here be remarked that, either through negligence or excessive affection, some of Savonarola's adherents have done him worse harm than his enemies. Nardi, for instance, although confessing that he had little knowledge of the trial, and writing many years after the event, nevertheless believed himself authorized to assert that only slight torture was inflicted on Savonarola, and, relying on his authority, innumerable writers afterwards repeated his words, without noticing that all contemporary biographers, chroniclers, and authors affirm the contrary, or that the Signory themselves had recorded how cruel was the extent of the Friar's sufferings.

But first of all it was necessary to obtain his signature, to the falsified depositions, the more especially because they were not, as required by the law, in the handwriting of the accused. Savonarola must therefore be induced to affix his name to the documents. It is difficult to exactly ascertain how this was accomplished. The examiners tell us that two days were spent in persuading the accused, by *words and humane encouragements;*[1] and all may imagine in what this humanity must have consisted.[2] Burlamacchi declares that one copy of the depositions was read to him, another given him to sign; and this would seem to be confirmed by what was afterwards said by the notary and judges themselves. In all probability, therefore, the first rough draft was read to the accused, and Ceccone's second compilation—the one afterwards printed—presented to him for signature. Nevertheless the divergences between one document and the other, though numerous and important, left essential points untouched, as may be seen from Violi's transcription of the greater part of them.[1] Hence we are able to affirm that on the 19th of April, in the presence of eight witnesses, six of whom were monks of his own convent, Savonarola affixed his name to a deposition that, although contradicting no essential point of his doctrines, he would have done better to tear into pieces, or at least refuse to sign. But confused by his own allegorical interpretations, he believed that he had thoroughly vindicated his conscience and dignity. We must again repeat that he held himself as one apart from the rest of mankind. Convinced of the possession of supernatural gifts, he neither felt bound to use ordinary terms of speech, nor to reveal his inmost thoughts, deeming that he could never be understood by the common herd, while for true believers allegorical language would always be enough. Having adhered to this system throughout his career, in his sermons, writings, and familiar discourses, he continued to adhere to it in his depositions. To gain any definite idea of the value of this mystical language, it is necessary to recur to the sermons in which Savonarola spoke of himself, to the writings of his disciples, and particularly to Frà Benedetto's commentary on his depositions, and it will then be seen that both the master and his followers frequently attribute to their words a contrary meaning to that which is apparently expressed.[2]

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[1] *Vide* the beginning of the report of the trial.

[2] The printed reports of the trial gave the world to understand that Savonarola had read them all with his own eyes, but this is contradicted by his biographers and also by the testimony of the witnesses whose signatures are appended to the documents. The first witness, Canon Adimari, vicar of the Archbishop Orsini, says in his subscription: "Interfuimus confessioni suprascripti Fratris Hieronymi Savonarolæ, qui lectis (sic) sibi," &c. This clearly proves that the depositions were read to, but not by him, and confutes the written statement made in the heading, that Savonarola, "having again re-read (the document),' appended his name to it.

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[1] *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, docs. xxi. and xxii., the narratives of Violi and Frà Benedetto.

[2] *Vide* "Vulnera Diligentis," bk. ii. chap. 16 and fol., and also the third part or book of the same work, which is almost exclusively devoted to the same theme.

It is related that the notary, having read the depositions to Savonarola, inquired: "Is all that *is* written here true?" Whereupon he made reply: "That which *I have* written is true," thus availing himself of a verbal quibble, that is held up to admiration by Frà Benedetto, Burlamacchi, and Pico, because they consider it to resemble the replies given by the Saviour to his judges. But subtle comments of this kind may be put aside, together with the numerous anecdotes invented by exaggerated and blind admirers, who regarded Savonarola not as a man, but as a saint; kept lights burning before his portrait as before a shrine, and offered up prayers to him. What we know for certain is, that after all the witnesses had added their signatures, he turned to them and pronounced the following words: "My doctrine is known to ye, and is known to all. In my present tribulation I ask of ye only two things: to have care of the novices and to preserve them in the Christian doctrine, to which we have hitherto kept them steadfast. Pray for me to the Lord, whose spirit of prophecy is removed from me at this moment."[1] Frà Malatesta Sacramoro, who was apparently determined to persevere in the part of Judas, then said to him: "But are the things which thou hast subscribed true or false?" Thereupon, Savonarola, giving him an indignant glance, turned away without making any reply, and was then led back to his prison.[2] Once alone he tried to deliberately review all that he had done; but his harassed and wearied mind immediately recurred to mystic contemplation, his cell became peopled with supernatural forms and invisible beings, and transported into an imaginary world, every other idea disappeared from his mind.[3]

[1] "Vita Latina," at sheet 58^t; Burlamacchi, p. 150; Pico, p. 79.

[2] Burlamacchi and Pico.

[3] This we shall find to be proved by what he wrote during his imprisonment.

Meanwhile, after prolonged debate, the Signory decided to print the depositions, although their notary was strongly opposed to that measure. In fact, notwithstanding the new alterations woven into them for the third time, the published version of the trial excited so general a burst of indignation against the Signory, that stringent orders were issued to suppress every copy. The greater part of them were consequently withdrawn; but in a few days[1] a second edition appeared, and publicity could no longer be evaded.

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[1] In fact, there were two fifteenth century editions of this first trial, and, although rare, a few copies of them are to be found in the public libraries of Florence. One of these editions, probably, we think, the first so hastily produced by the Signory, and then suppressed by public proclamation, begins as follows: "This is the examination and trial of Frà Hieronymo da Ferrara Savonarola, made by respectable and prudent men, commissioners and examiners of the Florentine Signory, solemnly elected and deputed, by *commission from the Holy Apostolic See*, as is faithfully herein shown." The other edition, of which the National Library possesses two copies, is inscribed as follows: "By the respectable and prudent men, commissioners and examiners of the excellent Florentine Signory, solemnly elected and deputed by the said excellent Signory." It would seem that the Signory sought to get out of the difficulty by subterfuge, throwing on the Pope the whole charge and responsibility of the trial and condemnation. And, in fact, we find them expressly stating, by letter, to the King of France, that Romolino and Turriano, the envoys of the Pope, had given sentence by the latter's authority, and that consequently the Signory had no responsibility in the matter: "Quo fit, ut nec mortis eius nos auctores fuerimus," &c. *Vide* Padre Marchese, doc. xli. p. 193. Even the sentence pronounced by the Eight refers to that given by the Papal Commissioners. This serves to explain why the phrase, *by commission of the Holy Apostolic See*, was inserted in the report of the trial published by the Signory. It is absent from the other edition. We believe that it must have been for the same reason that the Pope's letters to Francesco di Puglia and the Franciscans were printed at the end of the trial. It is difficult to ascertain by whom the second edition, which also includes the two letters of the Pope, could have been produced. We read in Burlamacchi, p. 148: "Nevertheless, this report of the trial was very slight, and contained nothing of any moment; accordingly they (the Signory) did not wish to make it public, but rather to concoct another of more seeming importance. With all this God allowed it to be divulged, inasmuch as Ser Ceccone, having sent a copy of it to a friend who had pledged himself to show it to no one, the said friend deceived him, by giving the said trial to be printed and published." These

Putting aside the desire many must have felt that Savonarola should have shown greater firmness, it was nevertheless sufficiently clear that even the replies extorted by torture, although altered in the rough draft, still more altered in the copy he had signed and farther tampered with in the printed version, only served to establish his complete innocence.[1]

The Signory, after assembling several *Pratiche*,[2] in order to obtain advice on the matter, finally adopted the desperate resource of holding a second trial. This was begun on the 21st of April; continued on the morning and evening of the 23rd, nearly all the depositions being radically changed by the notary; interrupted on the 24th, and on the 25th signed without any witnesses by Savonarola,

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words explain why the Signory caused a fresh version of the proceedings to be prepared; but the indiscretion alluded to, or another of the same sort, must, I believe, refer to the printed, instead of the manuscript version, and probably led to the production of a second edition, when the Signory ordered the suppression of the first.

[1] For all the particulars given above, the reader may be referred to the "Sesta Giornata" of Violi, and to the "Vulnera Diligentis," bk. ii. chap. 17, given in the Appendix to the Italian edition, docs. xxi. and xxii., and also to chap. 18, bk. ii. of the latter work, under the heading: *Delle contradizioni et falsità che sono nel processo stato stampato.* From what is said by Frà Benedetto and Violi, it is clear that the first written draft falsifying Savonarola's replies was very different from the copy placarded in the palace. This second copy differed again from the printed version of the trial, and Frà Benedetto himself noted down a few of the divergences he had discovered, as the following passage, for instance, which is omitted altogether from the second manuscript copy: "My citizens, when ye find that these enemies who believe not the things I have said, shall have committed some error, chastise them severely as enemies of the faith of Christ." He also remarked that the signatures of Savonarola and the witnesses had been altered, but without specifying how and where. But he repeatedly says that everything really subscribed by Savonarola redounds to his honour. He forgets to tell us whether the signed declarations he had seen were really in the Friar's handwriting; and it is impossible to arrive at the truth on this point, since the manuscript report of the trial kept in the Palace was burnt during the siege of Florence, as being an insult to Savonarola's memory. *Vide* also Varchi, "Storia di Firenze," Arbib edition, vol. ii. p. 365.

[2] *Vide* the before-quoted volume of "Pratiche" in the Florence Archives, and the collection edited by Signor Lupi.

who added to his signature an explicit declaration, that the document contained interpolations from the hand of Ser Ceccone. But this second attempt was soon given up, for the Signory found that it would only cause more confusion, and load them with greater responsibility.[1] They decided, therefore, to adhere to the first trial. But according to the custom of the Republic, it was necessary to have a full report of the proceedings read aloud in the hall of the Greater Council, in presence of the accused and of the general public. The Signory, however, merely allowed certain portions of it to be read by one of the chancellors of the Eight, who explained to the assembled crowd that Savonarola had refused to be present for fear of being stoned.[2] Of course no one believed this, and it was only another proof of the bad faith and ineptitude of the Signory, who were in fact so strongly dissatisfied with the whole conduct of the trial, that they gave Ser Ceccone only thirty ducats instead of four hundred,[3] on the score of his having failed to fulfil his engagements.

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[1] This second trial was first discovered by ourselves. It is included in Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxvi.

[2] Nardi, i. pp. 158–159, tells us that the reports were read of all Savonarola's different trials, even including that of his subsequent trial by the Papal Commissioners, the which being based upon questions of religious doctrine or ecclesiastical discipline was not subject to the approval of the council. But, as we have already noted, Nardi wrote on these things from memory, long after the event, and was frequently inexact as to details. He seems to think that a single report was afterwards concocted from the three which had been drawn up, but this is incorrect. On the 19th of April Somenzi wrote to Duke Ludovico, that the Signory had that day caused a *part* of the trial to be read before the Greater Council, "namely those parts of it which are of little moment." And this was to silence the champions of Savonarola, who were declaring that even by means of torture the Signory would never succeed in proving him guilty. On the 25th of April he wrote that they caused *another part of the trial* to be read, containing "*solum* the machinations and malicious practices of his followers." *Vide* Somenzi's letters in Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xx. It is clear from all this that the Signory felt that notwithstanding the arbitrary changes and falsifications made in the reports, they had failed to achieve their purpose.

[3] This is stated by Burlamacchi, and also in the "Diario" of Landucci. According to Frà Benedetto, Ceccone received thirty-three ducats.

CHAPTER X.

FRÀ DOMENICO, FRÀ SILVESTRO, AND MANY OTHER FRIARS, AND FRIENDS OF THE CONVENT ARE BROUGHT TO TRIAL. SAVONAROLA WRITES HIS LAST COMPOSITIONS WHILE IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.

(April 26—May 18, 1498.)

THE examinations of the two other prisoners must have resulted in equal discomfiture to the Signory. Domenico da Pescia surpassed himself under torture. His examiners tried to make him believe that Savonarola had retracted everything; they subjected him to the rack and the still more cruel torment of the boot;[1] but all was in vain, for he remained as calm and unshaken as one of the early martyrs of the Church. They next resolved to make a virtue of necessity, allowed him to write his own confession, and were even disposed to publish it without alterations, in order to establish a reputation for honesty, and thus induce the public to believe in the falsified report of Savonarola's trial.[1] But they lacked the courage to do it. On reading Frà Domenico's confession, they felt obliged to interpolate certain alterations, enabling them, without making any radical changes, to discolour the whole and efface the stamp of heroism that was visible in every word. They added to it, by guesswork, the names of the supporters of the convent, whom Frà Domenico had refused to betray, and even then could not decide to publish the document, but only circulated it in manuscript.

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[1] This is affirmed in Violi's "Giornate." "Il Sacro Arsenale ovvero Prattica dell' Offitio della Santa Inquisitione," by Dr. G. Pasqualoni (Rome and Bologna, 1716). In describing the torture of the boot, the author relates, at page 248, how a victim who, "dicto tormento suppositus, in terra prostratus, talo pedis dexteri denudato inter duos ferreos taxillos concavos posito, et Ministro eos *stanghetta* comprimente, clamare coepit."

On collating the two copies of these depositions, which were discovered by ourselves, we find that the one retouched by the Signory is better arranged, more grammatical, and more correct in style than the true and genuine confession. The latter is marked by an earnest, ingenuous eloquence that is no product of art, but the spontaneous expression of a magnanimous soul. It is impossible to read this examination without being deeply moved; we seem to be present in the torture-chamber; to witness the horrible wrenching of the sufferer's limbs; to hear the grating of his bones; to hearken to the faint, sublime utterances of this courageous Monk, who greets the approach of death with a martyr's angelic smile, and whose spirit is stirred by mortal pain to fresh praises of his Lord.[2]

His deposition began with these words: "Our Lord God Jesus Christ knows that I, Frà Domenico, bound here for His sake, speak no falseness on any of these matters." He declared that Savonarola and himself had always been averse to making any preparations for defence, or to opposing any armed resistance at St. Mark's. Touching the ordeal by fire, he said: "I came with the firm resolve to go through it, nor did I think that any objection would be made to my bearing the Host." "If, therefore, this gave rise to scandal, God, by whose will I accepted the ordeal, will grant me His reward, for verily I am deserving of it in this great infamy and persecution." And, on this first day, he concluded by saying to the Signory, "I pray ye not to interpret my words sophistically; but let them rather serve the purpose for which they are written."[1]

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[1] Frà Benedetto, "Vulnera Diligentis."

[2] Every one who reads both versions of this confession will easily be able to distinguish the genuine from the falsified copy. And if it be necessary to cite a contemporary authority, we have the powerful testimony of Frà Benedetto, who, in bk. iii. of his "Vulnera Diligentis," continually refers to Frà Domenico's *true* confession; and, to distinguish it from every other version, not only quotes its first and concluding words, but also a lengthy passage that is almost entirely omitted in the falsified copy. *Vide* Frà Benedetto, "Vulnera Diligentis," bk. iii. chaps. 3 and 9 in Codex 2985 of the Riccardi Library. *Vide* also, in Appendix to the Italian edition, the two confessions in doc. xxvii.

On the 16th of April, after the examiners had sought, by every kind of cruel and cunning device, to convince him that Savonarola had retracted,[2] they urged him to write his opinion of his master. And he hastened to write as follows: "From a certain impulse of my mind, I have ever believed, and, in the lack of better proof to the contrary, still firmly believe, in all the prophecies of Savonarola." And, after enumerating these prophecies he continued: "I am earnestly steadfast in this faith, nor should your Magnificencies be wrathful thereat, for this my belief can cause no hurt either to myself or the city, and in matters such as these every one is free to believe what he chooses." He also added that Savonarola had never suggested what he should preach, but had left him to be inspired by God. And he then said in conclusion: "I can remember nothing else; if ye desire to hear more from me, question me, according to the custom of good confessors, and I will endeavour to satisfy ye. And ye may truly believe all I say, inasmuch as having ever been of a tender conscience, I know well that to speak lies before a tribunal, or to conceal that which should be made known, is a sin. I have endeavoured to be as precise as though at the point of death, and assuredly I might easily die if ye torture me again, for I am all shattered, and my arms are useless, especially the left, which by this [1] is now dislocated for the second time. Wherefore I beg ye to be merciful and believe in the truth of my plain declarations."

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[1] *Vide* his confession, the first part of which is undated.
[2] We learn this from Frà Domenico's confession

But the judges continuing to torture him with still greater cruelty, Frà Domenico then wrote: "I know no more, for my sole concern has been to live a virtuous life, with Jesus Christ as King of Florence." "Thus, if not believing me, ye should even put me to torture anew, ye will discover no more, for there is nought else to be said; and ye will bring me nigh unto death." But his protestations were of no avail, for his judges were bent upon forcing him to deny his master. After putting him to renewed and more terrible anguish, they again bade him write, and thereupon the exhausted victim traced with trembling hand but undaunted courage the last and most remarkable words of his confession: "God's will be done. I have never perceived, nor had the least occasion to suspect that my Father, Frà Ieronimo, was a deceiver, or that he acted falsely in any wise; on the contrary, I have ever held him to be a thoroughly upright and most extraordinary man. And having a great reverence for him, I hoped, by his means, to receive grace from God and be enabled thereby to do some good to the souls of men; and holding him to be a man of God, I obeyed him as my superior, with all single-mindedness and zeal. . . . To my brethren and to a few laymen I have sometimes declared from the pulpit, that were I to detect the least error or deceit in Frà Ieronimo, I would openly reveal and proclaim it. And assuredly he himself has more than once testified that I was ready to do this; and I would do it now, if I knew of any duplicity in him. But none has ever come to my knowledge. *Finis. In simplicitate cordis mea lætus obtuli universa.*"[1]

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[1] *I.e.*, this torture.

Very different was the behaviour of Frà Silvestro. A sickly, nervous, visionary creature, subject to strange attacks of somnambulism, which he regarded as inspirations from God, he was of very weak character, and disposed to believe or disbelieve with equal facility. He had been much addicted to sauntering about the cloisters of St. Mark's, chattering with the townsfolk, and had been frequently reproved for this by Savonarola; but as many people sought his society, he always relapsed into the same error. Either from the difficulty of obtaining speech with Savonarola, and the knowledge of his entire confidence in Frà Silvestro, or from the widely spread fame of the latter's visions, and of the religious enthusiasm displayed in his conversation, it is certain that he was the chosen confessor of Francesco Valori, Piero Capponi, and other distinguished men, and in continual correspondence with them.[2]

But he cut a very poor figure in the hour of danger. We have seen how he disappeared during the attack on the convent, and remained in hiding until betrayed by Frà Malatesta to the guards. When subjected to examination on the 25th of April, his only thought was to save his own life, both at the sacrifice of his innocent master and his own dignity. His confession also underwent several changes at the hands of Ser Ceccone;[3] but its general tendency and gist remained sufficiently clear, and were of a nature to disgust his warmest supporters. Yet, strangely enough, he unconsciously affords new and striking proofs of Savonarola's innocence. While giving long lists of the names of those who frequented the convent, while denying the doctrines, and doing his utmost to detract from the purity of his master's life, he was, nevertheless, obliged to confess that Savonarola had never allowed himself to be influenced by party intrigue, nor treated of State affairs at St. Mark's. He said in conclusion : "As regards my own opinion of Frà Girolamo's deeds, I may say that on twenty or twenty-five different occasions when he was about to preach, he would come, before the sermon, to my cell, and say to me : 'I know not what to preach ; pray thou to God for me, since I fear that He may have forsaken me on account of my sins.' And he would say that he wished to unburden his soul, and accordingly make confession, and nevertheless would afterwards preach beautiful sermons. And the last time he did this, was on the Saturday before the last Sunday he preached in St. Mark's this Lent. Finally I declare that he deceived us."[1] This last sentence seems to have been added by Ser Ceccone ; but the whole deposition merely proves that Savonarola had the fullest confidence in the goodness and sincerity of the disciple who now so basely betrayed him and vainly endeavoured to blacken his fame !

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[1] *Vide* in Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxvii., the trial of Frà Domenico.

[2] The depositions of the three friars and of the rest of the accused-Burlamacchi, "Vita Latina." And Machiavelli alludes in his "Frammenti Storici" to Piero Capponi's relations with Frà Silvestro.

[3] Frà Benedetto says that *some* alteration was made in Frà Silvestro's confession. *Vide* "Vulnera Diligentis," bks ii. and iii.

During this time several other friars of St. Mark's and many of Savonarola's lay friends, who were in the convent on the day of the attack, had been brought to trial.[2] All were subjected to torture[3] and minutely questioned as to what schemes were planned in St. Mark's, the weapons stored there, and so forth. In this way some fresh particulars were elicited, but absolutely nothing that could damage Savonarola, whose innocence, on the contrary, was still more clearly established. All affirmed that he was exclusively devoted to the contemplation of heavenly things, and never took part in any political intrigues. They added, that so great was their respect and veneration for him, that no one ventured to enter his cell, for fear of distracting him from the meditations in which he was continually absorbed.[1]

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[1] *Vide* this trial in Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxviii.

[2] *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, the trials or depositions of the rest of the accused in doc. xxix.

[3] "And on the 27th day of April all the citizens arrested for this affair were put to torture ; so that from the 15th hour to the evening continual shrieks arose from the Bargello" (Landucci, "Diario," p. 174).

But when Savonarola's falsified confession was shown to the accused as a proof that he had denied the truth of his own prophecies and visions, some of them wavered in their faith. The monks in particular were easily betrayed into expressions of rage and indignation. Frà Roberto da Gagliano, who had been one of those most attached to Savonarola and his two companions, now implored the Signory on no account to let them return to the convent. But even at the height of his anger and excitement he was unable to conceal the great esteem and veneration he had previously felt for the master he now forsook, so that even his denunciations had the effect of a defence. "Having some learning as a theologian, I knew his doctrine to be sound and in nowise heretical. I could discern no fault in Frà Girolamo, but always beheld in him manifest signs of holiness, devotion, humility, and prayer, goodly words and excellent life and example, admirable conversation, sound, firm, and solid doctrine; so that I would have testified to these things at the risk of my life. But since he has so subtly feigned and deceived, I return thanks to God and your Excellencies for having opened our eyes."[1]

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[1] Andrea Cambini states in his deposition, that even Valori "never ventured to enter Savonarola's cell when the Prior was engaged in study" (Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxix. No. 18).

It is certain that the friars of St. Mark's behaved most contemptibly on this occasion. But we should remember that they were in an extremely difficult position, and that their faith was severely tried. To many of them, unfortunately, the new doctrine they professed was no vigorous outcome of a genuine belief, but was chiefly based on visions and prophecies. They had blindly desired, expected, nay, even positively counted on a miracle, and on seeing all hope of it disappear, knew not what to think. We can realize the cruel perplexity of their minds when we see that even Frà Benedetto, the faithful friend, heroic disciple, and unwearied defender of Savonarola, allowed himself to be overcome by doubt, and feeling—to use his own words—like a thrush when struck by a falling bough, hurried away to Viterbo.[2] But in his case quiet thought soon restored him to reason. On returning to Florence he minutely investigated facts, sought out genuine documents, questioned sincere witnesses, and becoming more and more confirmed in his old faith, persevered in it to the end of his life.[3] But all were not endowed with a like spirit of generous constancy; and even as early as the 21st of April the friars of St. Mark's addressed a letter to the Pope, that is an indelible blot on their fame.

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[1] *Vide* in Appendix to the Italian edition Frà Roberto's examination at doc. xxix. No. 11.

[2] *Come tordo avuta la ramata*, Frà Benedetto, "Cedrus Libani," chap. x.

[3] Ibid. *Vide* also the particulars given by Padre Marchese concerning the life of Frà Benedetto, in the "Scritti varii." On the 19th of April Luca Landucci, in the hall of the Grand Council, at the moment when the false confession was read out and proclaimed not only to be genuine, but in Savonarola's own hand, was so much shaken in consequence, as to write the following passage in his "Diario" (p. 173): ". . . wherefore I was astonished, stupefied, and amazed. I felt grieved to the soul to behold so great an edifice overthrown, through being so sadly based on a lie. I hoped to see Florence made a new Jerusalem, and become a splendid law and example of virtuous living, and hoped to see the renovation of the Church, the conversion of infidels, and the consolation of the good; yet I heard all the contrary to this, and had to gulp down the dose: *In voluntate tua, Domine, omnia sunt posita.*"

They prostrated themselves at the Holy Father's feet, and sought to throw all blame, whether true or supposed, on Savonarola's shoulders. But as all his accusers seemed unwittingly compelled to speak in his defence, so even this missive redounded to his praise. "Not merely ourselves," said the friars, "but likewise men of far greater talent, were deceived by Frà Girolamo's cunning. The fineness of his doctrine; the rectitude of his life; the holiness of his manners; his pretended devotion, and the good results he obtained by purging the city of immorality, usury, and every species of vice; the different events which confirmed his prophecies in a manner beyond all human power and imagination, and which were so numerous and of such a nature, that had he not made retractation himself, declaring that his words were not inspired by God, we should never have been able to renounce our faith in him. For so firm was our belief in him, that we were all most ready to go through the fire in support of his doctrine." They then asked to be absolved from the excommunication incurred by having been followers of Savonarola, and for having, some of them, borne arms on the day of the assault of the convent. Farther on in the letter, it is strange to find the friars supplicating the Holy Father to graciously preserve their congregation intact and separate from any other, under a vicar of their own. It was to maintain the independence of this very congregation that Savonarola had so strenuously fought, and it was for this cause that the Pope had afterwards excommunicated him and his convent. His friars now supported their request by the identical arguments urged by himself in the letter that had provoked so tremendous an outburst of the Papal wrath. And they concluded by saying: "May it be enough for your Holiness to have seized the source and chief of all error, Frà Girolamo Savonarola; let him suffer condign punishment if there be any meet for wickedness such as his; and let us strayed sheep return to the true shepherd."[1]

This letter was carried to Rome by two friars furnished with warm recommendations from the Signory.[2] The Pope's reply was dated the 14th of May, and after praising the repentance of the friars, gave them his absolution, and promised to give careful consideration to the question of their independence, the which had been so often alternately granted and refused.[3] Meanwhile crowds of people were flocking to the Duomo, no longer, however, to be spell-bound by Savonarola's voice, but to enjoy the plenary indulgence conceded to all who had striven against him, regardless of the crimes or even murders they might have committed for this purpose.[4]

A most active correspondence was still going on between the Republic and the Pope. Alexander was insistently demanding that Savonarola, after being sufficiently examined and tortured, should be consigned to him alive; but the Signory felt that this could not be done without gravely compromising the dignity of the State. Accordingly they temporized with his Holiness, making fresh attempts to obtain the concession of the tax on Church property that had been so warmly advocated by Savonarola and been the cause of so many charges against him. The members of the Pratica agreed with the Signory in urging this request, but the Pope either kept silence on the subject, or took time to reflect, and the Florentines continued to press the demand. It appeared as though all were endeavouring to trade on the poor

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[1] Perrens, doc. xviii.

[2] Padre Marchese, doc. xxxv.

[3] Perrens, doc. xviii.

[4] Nardi, vol. i. pp. 154–155; Landucci, "Diario," p. 173.

Friar's life in order to gain in exchange for it the identical concessions he had been the first to ask, and which were now leading him to martyrdom.[1]

The moment was approaching for the election of a new Signory, and the Pratica met almost daily.[2] On the 27th and 28th of April the Signory in office asked the opinion of the meeting: as to what reply should be sent to the Pope; how to provide for the finances; and how to maintain order in the city?

And Vespucci, now the leading voice in the council, advised that they should continue to temporize with Rome, and prolong the examination of the three friars, so as to leave their sentence to be decided by the incoming Signory, showing leniency meanwhile to the rest of the accused. That on all questions of finance and the preservation of order in the city, he would leave everything to the discretion of the present Signory.[1] The Government accordingly followed his advice, and terminated the other trials, by sentencing nineteen citizens to slight fines or partial banishment and exclusion from public offices for a short term of years; while to many others free pardon was accorded. As to those who had attacked the Piagnoni, and assassinated Valori and his family, they were not even brought to trial![2] And to prove the Government's love of freedom and hatred to the Medici, the sentence to outlawry as rebels, still in force against Alessandro and Lamberto dell' Antella, the discoverers of the Piero de' Medici plot, was entirely revoked.[3]

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[1] The reports of the "Pratiche," and other documents published by Padre Marchese and Gherardi, furnish clear proofs of all this. Many other measures Savonarola had proposed were adopted after his death, some even while he was being put to the torture. We have already spoken of the Church Tithes and the separation of St. Mark's, and may now repeat that he was the first to advocate the election of a perpetual Gonfalonier. He had also suggested the appointment of a foreign judge of appeal, as the first step to the formation of a *Ruota*, or court of wealthy citizens, who were also to be highly paid in order to ensure their incorruptibility. And on the 20th of April, that is, the day before the commencement of his second trial, a decree was issued (*vide* "Provvisione" 191, sheet 5, Florence Archives, cl. ii. dist. ii.) abolishing the office of Bargello, and re-establishing in its stead that of the Captain of the People, suppressed in 1477. The Captain's tribunal was to be the lower court of appeal, that of the Podestà, the higher court. Meanwhile, however, the Bargello, or Captain of the Piazza, was to have an additional guard of thirty soldiers, until the new Captain of the People should come into office, and occupy the same palace next the Custom House, then tenanted by the Bargello. We cannot ascertain the exact purpose of this reform, which was not strictly identical with that advised by Savonarola, although, in fact, a new foreign judge of appeal was likewise appointed. It may be that the Signory wished to seem favourable to democratic laws, and feigned a reform that would lead to good results, while actually increasing the power of the Bargello, whose services would be needed for the execution of the sentences they had in view. At all events, it is certain that a *Ruota* on Savonarola's plan was afterwards established, composed of native judges, instead of the foreign Podestà and Captain.

[2] By Register 66 of the "Pratiche" in the Florence Archives, it appears that they were held on the 13th, 14th, 20th, 26th, 27th, and 28th of April, but that other meetings also took place.

But there was another measure still to be taken in order to ensure the election of a new Signory thoroughly hostile to Savonarola; since otherwise the public laws and faith would have been violated in vain, and the torturing of the prisoner mere labour lost. If the Piagnoni should now return to power, Savonarola would not only be rescued, but avenged, and the iniquities of his trial proclaimed to the world. But all this proved very easy to prevent. On the day the Grand Council assembled for the election of the magistrates, by a new and incredible infringement of the law, a great number of the most popular citizens of Florence were excluded from the hall at the moment for taking the votes.[1] Thanks to this arbitrary proceeding, Messer Vieri de' Medici, a fit representative of his name,[2] was elected Gonfalonier of Justice, with a Signory of the same type as the last. The new magistrates found their work all laid out for them, and had only to pursue the same course and put the seal of bloodshed to the almost consummated crime.

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[1] *Vide* the above-mentioned Register of the "Pratiche," sheet 72 and fol.

[2] *Vide* Florence Archives, the deliberations of the 30th of April, 1498. Same Register, sheet 39^t and fol.

[3] "Provvisione" of 23rd of April, 1498. It was carried in the Eighty by sixty black against twenty-three white beans; and in the Greater Council by 706 black against 305 white. The white beans, as all know, were used to mark disapproval. *Vide* in the Florence Archives, "Consigli Maggiori, Provissioni," Registers, cl. ii. dist. ii. 190, sheet 16.

Their first act, on assuming office, was to assemble the Pratica on the 5th of May, to consult as to what they were to do. Some made reply: "That it was requisite to impress upon the Pope that the sentence must be executed in the same place where the crime had been committed; but that should it prove expedient to yield on this point, an attempt should at least be made, by examining Savonarola anew, to extract all he had in his body, seeing that, up to this moment, they had only stripped off the rind." Then Piero Popoleschi began to speak in the name of the Ten, and as the Gonfalonier of the preceding Signory and the chief director of the trial, his words naturally carried great weight.[3] Like most of the majority, he insisted that the friars should on no account be consigned to Rome. It were preferable, he said, to ask the Pope to send commissioners of his own to examine Savonarola anew, if more information was to be extracted from him. But he vehemently opposed, and certainly not without reason, the proposal for a new trial, "both on account of the manner in which the examination has been already conducted, and for the peace and quiet of the city; inasmuch as the renewal of those proceedings might arouse scandal, and also because all the potentates of Italy have written to the same effect."[1] Thus it was clear that the ex-Gonfalonier objected to another trial because he greatly feared that it would only result in bringing to light the falsification of the first. Nothing of that kind was to be dreaded if the matter were taken in hand by the Papal Commissioners. They would know their business too well; and being bound by no obligation to make their proceedings public, with the help of Ser Ceccone and the torture-chamber, would be perfectly able to achieve their intent.

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[1] Nardi (vol. i. p. 156) says that two hundred were thus excluded, but this must surely be an exaggeration.

[2] There were four Medici with the same Christian name, and one of them was actually a follower of Savonarola. The temper of the man now mentioned will be shown by the sequel.

[3] It will be remembered that the new Council of Ten had come into office at the beginning of the trial. Popoleschi had therefore been elected, while still holding the post of Gonfalonier—another act of monstrous illegality.

On the evening of the same day (5th of April) the Signory wrote to Bonsi, now Savonarola's enemy, and on the following day to the Pope, repeating that they could not send the three friars to Rome, because they wished to make an example of them in Florence; and adding that it would be better that his Holiness should appoint his own Commissioners instead.[2] The Pope had always most strongly, and even threateningly, insisted on the friars being sent to Rome, so that he might pronounce their sentence himself. But his sole aim in this was to ensure their death. Accordingly, he no sooner perceived that the Florentines were bent on the same purpose, and in a position to carry it out, than he showed himself willing to come to terms, and had indeed already suggested to the ambassador how the matter could be arranged.[1] On receipt of this last despatch from Florence, he wrote at once (11th of April) to Paganotti the bishop,[2] and on the following day to the Signory,[3] announcing that he should send to Florence the General of the Dominicans, Giovacchino Turriano, and the Doctor of Law, Francesco Romolino, "to examine into the crimes and iniquities of those three children of perdition." Also with a refinement of cruelty, he imposed on the Dominican bishop, who was regarded as a friend of Savonarola, the task of degrading him and handing him over to the secular arm. At the same time he granted Florence the much-desired tithe on church property for the term of three years. Accordingly the most faithful of the Piagnoni went about repeating: "This friar has been sold, like unto the Saviour, for thirty pieces of silver; for truly three times ten make thirty."[4] And meanwhile the Florentines were communicating with the different courts, in order to prepare men's minds for the final event. Having little confidence in Francesco Pepi, their orator at Milan, they appointed Messer Guidantonio Vespucci as his coadjutor.[5] It was still more difficult to manage Guasconi, their ambassador in France, who was not only known to be a zealous Piagnone, but high in the favour of King Louis XII. For, although in a far less degree than his predecessor, Charles VIII., this monarch also was well inclined towards Savonarola. Hence, while informing Guasconi "for the regulation of his conduct" of the events which had taken place in Florence, they enjoined him to keep absolute silence on them at Court. But, without any attempt to hide the depth of his grief, he immediately replied that the king of France was already informed of everything, and was, in fact, hastening to appoint a new ambassador to Florence. He went on to say that, being worn out and broken by his great age (really by his great sorrow), he desired to be recalled without delay.[1] The Florentines also wrote to the other Courts, always adopting a tone suited to the temper of the potentate addressed, and meanwhile they lost no time in the city, but relentlessly pushed matters on to the predestined end.

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[1] *Vide* this "Pratica" in the before-quoted Register, sheet 86ᵗ. It is also included in Lupi's published collection.

[2] P. Marchese, docs. xxxvi. and xxxvii. The second letter (dated 6th of May) begins thus: "Cum torqueremus adhuc Hieronymum Savonarolam proximis diebus," &c. These words are an additional proof, were any needed, that Savonarola was tortured on other days besides the 19th of April, stated to be the only time, in the report of the trial. But this report has been contradicted in many other ways.

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[1] *Vide* Bonsi's letter in Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," pp. 168–169.

[2] Perrens, doc. xix. vol. i. p. 512.

[3] Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," p. 172.

[4] Landucci, "Diario," p. 175. The concession of the *Decima* arrived in Florence on the 13th of May, 1498.

[5] *Vide* the letter to Pepi of the 21st and 23rd of April, in Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," pp. 161–162.

And what of Savonarola during this time? The Apostolic Commissioners only arrived on the 19th of May, and ever since the 25th of April, after the second deposition had been signed, he had been left in peace in the solitude of his tower cell. For some days he was too bruised and torn to be able to use his arms; but the right hand, which was always somewhat spared during torture, so that the victim might write his own confession as was required by the law, soon began to improve. He was then enabled to resume his pen, and all that he wrote at this solemn time is deserving of special attention.

But the reader will find no attacks on his judges, no complaints of the barbarities inflicted on him, no attempt at self-defence. Savonarola had nothing more to hope in this world; his thoughts were exclusively given to God; he wrote an exposition and commentary of the Fiftieth Psalm, *Miserere mei Deus*. "Sinner that I be, where shall I turn? To the Lord, whose mercy is infinite. None may take glory in himself; all the saints tell us: not unto us, but unto the Lord be the glory. They were not saved by their own merits, nor their own works; but by the goodness and grace of God, wherefore none may take glory to himself. O Lord, a thousand times hast Thou wiped away my iniquity, yet a thousand times have I fallen back into it. . . . But when Thy spirit shall descend upon me, when Christ shall live within me; then shall I be safe. Strengthen me in Thy spirit, O Lord; not until then, can I teach Thy ways to the wicked. Hadst thou asked the sacrifice of my body, I would have given it ere now; but burnt-offerings are as nought to Thee; Thou wouldst have the offering of the spirit. Therefore, O sinner, bring thy repentant heart unto the Lord, and nought else shall be required of thee." He then recurred to his dominant idea of the renovation of the Church. "I ardently desire the salvation of all men; the works of the good would greatly console me. Wherefore, I beseech Thee, look on Thy Church, and behold how in these days more infidels than Christians are numbered in its fold, and how every one doth make a god of his belly. Send forth Thy spirit, and let the face of the earth be renewed. Hell is filled, Thy Church desolate. Arise; why sleepe~~th~~ Thou, O Lord? Our sacrifices find - st no favour in Thy sight, for they are mere ceremonies and unrighteous. Where be now the glory of the apostles, the fortitude of the martyrs, the holy simplicity of the monks?" . . . Continuing in this strain he seemed to forget his prison walls and believe himself once more in the pulpit. In reading this meditation one might almost conceive it to be one of Savonarola's most daring sermons; for, as Nardi justly said, he always remained equal to himself.[1]

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[1] Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," pp. 157–160. The new envoy alluded to by Guasconi, was the Florentine Niccolò Alamanni. It seems that he was really charged by the king, though with no great earnestness, to endeavour to save Savonarola. He arrived before all was over, but found it was too late for any attempt in the prisoner's favour. The Signory feigned ignorance of his mission, but sent to ask him for certain valuable manuscripts formerly lent to him by Piero de' Medici, and they pressed their demand so rudely, that, as they had hoped, he soon departed in high dudgeon.

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[1] *Vide* "Esposizione sul Miserere." Audin de Rians cites in his bibliography of fifteenth century editions of Savonarola's works, eight Latin

Throughout this part of his "Esposizione" one might suppose that both visions and spirit of prophecy had entirely disappeared in prison; but a little further on we find that solitude was again inducing mental excitement; for his imagination becomes heated, and the harassed prisoner is haunted by the old apparitions.

His second composition at this period consisted of an exposition of the Thirtieth Psalm,[1] *In te*, *Domine*, *speravi*. In this Savonarola recounts the struggle between Despair and Hope contending for his heart. He does not describe the combatants as abstract or allegorical beings, but seems to hear first the clashing of chains and then the voices of the two angels; after which heaven opens before his eyes. "Despair hath pitched his camp around me, and encompassed me with a strong and numerous host; he hath filled my heart, and unceasingly warreth against me, with violence and clamour, by night and by day. My friends are arrayed under his banner, and become my foes. All things which I see, and all I hear, bear the device of Despair. . . . Wherefore, even as the sweetest thing seemeth bitter to the fever-stricken, so for me all is turned to bitterness and affliction. . . . But I will turn me to Heaven, and then Hope will come to my aid. Behold! already Despair quaileth beneath her glance! Now, let the world weigh on me as it will, let my enemies rise against me; my fear hath passed from me, for I have rested all my hope in the Lord. Peradventure, O Lord, Thou wilt not grant my prayer to be released from bodily anguish, for such grace might be hurtful to the soul, inasmuch as virtue gains strength in tribulation. Then shall I be

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and five Italian editions of this pamphlet. Even more are enumerated in the Guicciardini Catalogue. The "Esposizione" was originally written in Latin.

[1] Audin de Rians cites five Italian and one Latin edition of this second pamphlet. This also was originally composed Latin, and translated immediately afterwards.

temporally confounded by men; their strength and power shall he arrayed against me; but Thou dost permit it, for that I be not confounded in eternity." Then a passage follows that is specially worthy of note, since it was chiefly this or some other entirely analogous part of the exposition that served the Protestants as the basis of their theory that Savonarola was one of the martyrs of their Church.

"Wherefore, I will put my hope in the Lord, and He will haste to deliver me from all tribulation. And bv whose merits? Not by mine, O Lord, but by Thine. I offer not up my justice to Thee, but I seek Thy mercy. The Pharisees took pride in their justice; wherefore it was not the justice of God, the which is only to be attained by grace; and no one will ever be justified in God's sight for solely performing the works of the law." At this point the phantom of Despair appears, with such clashing of arms and sounding of trumpets, that Savonarola says: "Hardly could I keep myself from falling to earth; and he would have bound me fast in his chains and led me to his kingdom, had not Hope appeared to me all radiant and shining with a heavenly splendour, and smilingly cried: 'Oh! Knight of Christ, what is thy mind in this battle? . . . Hast thou faith or hast it not?' 'Yes, I have faith.' 'Well, then, know that this is a great grace of God, for faith is his gift, and is not to be attained by our works, lest any one should take glory to himself.'"

It has been found easy to conclude from this passage that Savonarola here intended to maintain the theory of justification by faith alone and the merits of Jesus Christ, and not by works, the which theory is the basis of the reformed doctrine. But before accepting this verdict we must remember that, according to the Protestant, as well as the Catholic point of view, salvation is attained by faith which is the gift of grace. The sole difference consists in determining the manner in which human free-will can contribute to salvation. The Catholics maintain that good works and outward ceremonies are of great importance, and that free-will contributes to salvation. The Protestants, on the other hand, declare works and ceremonies to be utterly useless, and that all depends upon faith and grace: faith being derived from grace, and good works from faith. In other words, we are saved by grace alone; our own will is altogether powerless, the salvation of the elect is predestined. This once established, all may understand how easy it is to claim as a Protestant every Catholic writer who dwells on the omnipotence of faith, the necessity of grace, and the small value of our own works and merits. But it is only by piercing to the core of these doctrines, and investigating them in their intrinsic unity, that we can accurately judge them. No one can give any real attention to Savonarola's writings without quickly discerning how great a value he assigned to human free-will, and how firmly persuaded he was of the necessity of contributing of our own will to prepare ourselves for the reception of grace. He gives great importance to good works, and no less to outer ceremonies, although he would only have them used to open and stimulate the spirit. But who can feel surprise if in these days of solitary imprisonment, crippled by torture, forsaken and betrayed by his fellow-men, he should have neglected to dwell on the gifts of human free-will, and rather preferred to place his sole hope in the Lord? Nevertheless, on reading the continuation of this second "Esposizione," none can be deceived as to the real character of his doctrines.

Savonarola continues thus: "Despair assailed me and said: Seest thou not that thou callest on heaven and earth, yet none cometh to thy aid? Seest thou not that death is thy only refuge? And all his host cried aloud, wherefore shedding tears of grief, I fell upon my face. And thereupon Hope, all shining and full of splendour, quickly descended from heaven, and, touching me, raised me from the earth and said: How long wilt thou be as a child? Let Despair point, if he can, to any sinner, however hardened, who, having turned to God and repented, hath not been accepted and justified." . . .[1] "Who is he that putteth bounds to the mercy of God, and thinketh to bear the waters of the ocean in his hands? Hast thou not heard the Lord say: when the sinner repenteth and turneth away from his sins, I will no more remember his iniquities?[2] . . . God's mercy is boundless. Didst thou fall? Rise up, and mercy shall receive thee. Wast thou ruined? Cry, and mercy shall come to thee." It is clear from this that man's works and free-will have a recognized value, according to the Catholic creed. And after this Savonarola went on to say: Then, full of gladness, I exclaimed: I will put no trust in men, but only in the Lord, and will return thanks before all the people, for the death of saints is precious in the Lord's sight. If all the hosts of the world be arrayed against me, my heart shall know no fear, for Thou art my refuge and wilt lead me to my end." . . . But at this point he was compelled to cease writing from lack of paper.

These two prison meditations obtained an enormous celebrity at the time. That on the *Miserere* soon ran into thirteen separate editions, and even circulated through Germany; and the fame of both was afterwards greatly increased when republished by Martin Luther at Stras-

[1] If there be no sinner who on returning to God hath not been accepted, their salvation is at least begun by free-will. Calvin was opposed to this doctrine, and Luther by no means admitted it in his "De Servo Arbitrio."

[2] These words of Scripture are quoted and insisted upon even by Protestants, since they unite with Catholics in believing in the infinite mercy of God; but Savonarola quotes the text in order to prove that it is needful for man to *will* to be saved, adding that if he have this *will*, God shall assuredly come to his aid.

burg in 1524, with a preface in which he declared Savonarola to be a precursor of the Protestant doctrine and one of the martyrs of the Reformation.[1] "This man was put to death," so wrote Luther, "solely for having desired that some one should come to purify the slough of Rome. It was the Antichrist's (the Pope's) hope that all remembrance of this great man would perish under a load of malediction ; but thou seest that it still lives and that his memory is blessed. Jesus Christ proclaims him a saint through our lips, even though Pope and Papists should burst with rage. Even by these writings thou shalt see how works are of no avail in God's sight, and how faith is the one thing needful. What if some theological mud be still found sticking to his feet,[2] who could be altogether free of it in those days? Thou wilt likewise see his distrust and despair of his own strength, and a pure image of faith and hope in God's mercy. Neither in the strength of his vows nor the rule of his Order, neither in his priestly robe, in masses nor in works, did he rest his hope, but solely in the Gospel, in faith, and in righteousness." It is quite true, and also perfectly natural, that, in those solemn moments, Savonarola despaired of himself, and put his sole and whole trust in God. Nevertheless it is absolutely false that he ever renounced or neglected to maintain the value of those good works and religious ceremonies, of which, on the contrary, he was apt to exaggerate the importance almost to the point of superstition. Even if all we have said were insufficient to overthrow the verdict of the great Reformer, Savonarola's last acts, and the last words he was able to write in prison, would amply suffice to that end. Had Martin

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[1] "Meditatio pia et erudita Hieronymi Savonarolæ a Papæ exusti, super Psalmos," Miserere Mei *et* In te Domine operavi. Argentorati, an. MDXXIIII.

[2] *I.e.*, scholastic mud.

Luther been acquainted with them they would have certainly removed all doubt from his mind.

Like all who came in contact with Savonarola, his gaoler was soon inspired with a deep veneration for him, and repeatedly besought him for the gift of some written words on virtuous living. After often excusing himself on account of his tortured joint and lack of paper: the Prior ended by granting the man's request, and wrote on a book cover, a *Rule for virtuous living*,[1] that was religiously preserved and afterwards appeared in print. "Virtuous living," Savonarola wrote, "depends wholly on grace; wherefore we must strive to attain grace, and, having won, to increase it. To examine our sins, to meditate on the vanity of earthly things, are means towards grace; *confession and communion incline our hearts to receive it.* Certainly it is a free gift of God, but when we have a strong contempt for the world, a strong desire to turn us to spiritual things, then we may say that even if grace be not yet in us, it is assuredly drawing nigh. *Therefore, perseverance in virtuous living, in good works, in confession, in communion, in all that draweth us nearer unto grace, is the true and certain way to procure its increase.*" If any should fail to recognize that this doctrine is purely and exclusively Roman Catholic, and that Savonarola remained steadfastly true to his creed to the the close of his life, it would be impossible to find other proofs by which to convince him. But we might beg our disputant to note the Prior's last steps towards the scaffold, for then none, save the mentally blind, could preserve the shadow of a doubt on the subject.

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[1] "Regola del ben vivere cristiano, composta mentre era in carcere," &c Florence, 1498, 1529; Venice, 1547.

CHAPTER XI.

SAVONAROLA IS PUT TO FRESH TORTURE BY THE APOSTOLIC COMMISSIONERS. HIS THIRD TRIAL AGAIN PROVES HIM INNOCENT. THE CONDEMNATION AND EXECUTION OF THE THREE FRIARS.

(MAY 19-23, 1498.)

THE Papal Commissioners entered Florence in state on the 19th of May. They consisted of Giovacchino Turriano, General of the Dominicans, and the Spaniard Francesco Romolino, Bishop of Ilerda, Auditor to the Governor of Rome, and afterwards well known as the Cardinal Romolino. The dregs of the people flocked round them with cries of "Death to the Friar!" And Romolino smilingly replied: "He shall die without fail." In fact, Girolamo Benivieni was in receipt of letters from Rome informing him that "The two Commissioners were instructed to put Savonarola to death *were he even another St. John the Baptist*."[1] And they made no secret of this, for Romolino was scarcely established in the house of a certain Pandolfo della Luna, near San Pietro Scheraggio, than he said to his host: "We shall make a fine bonfire; I bear the sentence with me, already prepared."[2]

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[1] "Vita Latina," sheet 60; Burlamacchi, p. 154.

[2] Ibid. sheet 60.

The following day, 20th of May, the torturers were in waiting, and Savonarola was subjected to a third examination. In addition to the Papal Commissioners, it was attended by Paolo Benini and Biagio di Giovanni for the Gonfaloniers of the Guilds; by Giovanni Canacci for the Twelve Worthies; by Piero degli Alberti for the Ten; and by Francesco Pucci for the Eight. As Ser Ceccone had performed his work so badly before, he was now given several coadjutors to assist him in framing his reports, so that emulation might sharpen his wits and enable him to falsify the prisoner's replies in the manner required.

The examiners tortured the poor Friar most pitilessly;[1] and the first questions they asked him related to the council, and more particularly as to his accomplices in the attempt. Savonarola said: "I will plainly tell you that I advised with no one on the matter of the council, and only spoke of it in these last days to one or two of my brethren. I have never had any communication with the princes of Italy, inasmuch as I considered them all as my foes. Nevertheless I hoped that the foreign rulers would favour the undertaking, on account of the evil conduct of the Roman Court, and had especial hope in the King of England, from having heard that he was a good man. As to the cardinals and prelates, I regarded them all as my enemies." Being asked whether he had caused secrets of the confessional to be revealed to him, he instantly replied: "that he had never made any such request, nor would it have been granted by his friars."

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[1] "But even this small first draft of his examination by Romolino was also written thus briefly by Ser Ceccone and others who were present at the said examination" (Violi, "Giornata Scota."). It is here and there expressly stated in the report, that even Romolino's secretary noted down the replies; and Frà Benedetto, in quoting an extract from them, remarks: "Let it not irk thee to read (I pray thee) some of the formal words traced by Ser Lodovico Menchi" ("Vulnera Diligentis," part iii. chap. 3, at sheet 6t). *Vide* the third trial in Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxvi.

Beginning to see that nothing was to be obtained from the prisoner, Romolino now became furious, and assailed him with threats; but finding menaces of no avail, immediately ordered Savonarola to be once more put to the question. Thereupon the Friar turned to those present and emphatically said: "Now hearken to my words and bear me witness, ye Signory of Florence! I have denied my Divine light from fear of torment. If I must perforce suffer, I will suffer for the truth; all that I have declared hath come to me from God." While thus speaking he was being stripped and replaced on the rack; but these words were so clearly and firmly pronounced that they were noted down almost *verbatim.*[1] In the agony of torture Savonarola's mind again wandered, and the vague replies then extorted from him were quickly changed by the notary. But on all essential points of doctrine neither tortures nor falsifications availed to obscure his meaning. He was asked if he had ever sought to make a division in the Christian Church, and instantly, as though roused from delirium, he gave the answer: "Never, unless your demand is meant to refer to certain ceremonies by which I enforced discipline among my friars. But it is entirely true that excommunication had no terrors for me."[1]

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[1] Here are the words as they stand in part iii. of the "Vulnera Diligentis" (Cod. cit., sheet 7), and which Frà Benedetto states to be taken from one of the copies in Ser Ceccone's hand, and that, although falsified in the usual manner, shows several divergences from the later, and still more mutilated, version given in the Appendix to the Italian edition: "*Jussus expoliari.* Now hearken to my words, O God! Thou hast detected me. Here he fell on his knees, saying: I confess that I have denied Christ. I have spoken lies. O Signory of Florence, I have denied Him from dread of torture. If I have to suffer, I will suffer for the truth. That which I have said came to me from God. O God, Thou dost impose penance on me for having denied Thee. I deserve it. I have denied Thee, I have denied Thee, I have denied Thee for fear of torments, for fear of torments! He was on his knees, and, showing his almost shattered left arm, cried: Jesus, aid me; this time Thou hast found out my sin." All this, it is evident, is always in reference to the light of prophecy, the point on which Savonarola had given way.

On the 21st the proceedings recommenced with certain strangely contradictory declarations, intended to confirm all that had been transcribed at the preceding examinations. To these Savonarola's name had been affixed, but by whose hand is unknown. Their contents are too void of sense to have any value, and indeed all the minutes of this third trial are utterly worthless, being even more falsified than the others, so that it is difficult to believe that even one genuine reply is contained in them. And although, according to the text, they were signed by Savonarola, neither his name nor those of the witnesses are to be found at the conclusion. So shameless were the Friar's persecutors that they no longer made even a pretence of observing legal forms. They continued to ply him with innumerable strange and ridiculous demands, as, for example: "If he had ever maintained that Jesus Christ was only a man." To which Savonarola replied: "Only a fool could ask that." Then they inquired "whether he believed in charms?"[2] And he rejoined: "I always made mock of them." Romolino once more recurred to the affair of the council, in order to learn who had favoured the plan, and particularly whether the Cardinal of Naples had been concerned in it. He asked the same question again and again, using promises, threats, and torture, until at last, after a thousand denials of having negotiated or consulted with any one on the matter, Savonarola cried, almost maddened with pain: "Naples! Naples! I took counsel with him and others." But on the 22nd, when they began to question him for the third time, his first thought was to retract all that he had said to the injury of others when raving in anguish, and instantly declared: "Neither with the Cardinal of Naples, nor with others, have I spoken any word of the council." Romolino then understood that nothing more was to be extracted from him; that neither by tortures nor the devices of the notaries could sufficient evidence be gained to justify his condemnation, and that no more time need be wasted in the attempt. Accordingly, after a few more hasty questions, he summoned Savonarola to appear before him the following day to receive his sentence. "I am a prisoner," replied the friar; "I will come if my jailers bring me."

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[1] In these, as in all the other minutes of Savonarola's trial, it may be taken for granted that the only genuine and untouched depositions are those which are in favour of the accused, for certainly these would not have been invented either by the examiners or the notary.

[2] As we have already mentioned, Violi and Frà Benedetto are able to supply a few questions and answers not contained in the report as it has been preserved, for through the wife of Ser Ceccone they contrived to obtain the original draft written in the notary's own hand. But even this was not the genuine deposition, since some alterations were made even in the act of noting down the replies, and additional changes were interpolated in every subsequent copy. Frà Benedetto found by the rough draft that Savonarola had been asked "whether he had ever committed sodomy"; but this is entirely omitted from the copy we possess. On this head Frà Benedetto expresses himself as follows: "The thing is even truer than I say, and I have it not from a third copy, but have myself read it in the original, *i.e.*, in the first rough draught Ser Ceccone

But all was not over. Day was closing, the vesper bell ringing the hour of sunset, and Savonarola engaged in quiet meditation, when five citizens suddenly broke into his cell. They came with the notary to see whether, by surprising him at this last moment, when so exhausted by mental and bodily anguish, it might not be possible to conquer him by threats. They wished to question him on political matters, and extort something more than was to be gleaned from his first deposition, the only one that had been published, and that was altogether unsuited to their purpose. Savonarola, however, calmly reiterated his

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made in noting down the heads of what was said by Frà Hieronimo." Then he adds farther on, that he got this first rough draft into his hands by the aid of Ser Ceccone's wife. Frà Benedetto, "Vulnera Diligentis," bk. ii. chaps. 16, 17, 18; Violi, "Giornate." *Vide* Appendix to the Italian edition, docs. xxi. and xxii.

previous declaration: "I left all details to Valori. The chief objects my friends had in view were that the majority of the council should consist of men favourable to the popular government; to deal severely with our opponents when they committed crimes; to keep the people strong and united, not for purposes of offence, but in order to resist attack."[1]

Thus ended the third trial, of which the Apostolic commissioners had little reason to be proud. After all their promises, their attempts to prove Savonarola guilty had utterly failed, for his innocence was plainer than before. Hence, this final examination, was neither printed, signed, nor read to the public;[2] and was left unfinished. The examiners kept it concealed, and only allowed one or two copies of it to be circulated among the Italian Courts.[3]

But notwithstanding the failure of their attempt, the Apostolic Commissioners met on the same day (22nd of May) to consult as to the fate of the three monks. The question was soon settled. As to Savonarola and Frà Silvestro, no discussion was required: their death was a foregone conclusion. Wishing, however, to lighten in some degree the gloomy impression this sentence might produce on the public, Romolino proposed that Frà Domenico's life should be spared. But when it was remarked by one of the citizens present "that all Savonarola's doctrines would be kept alive by this friar," Romolino instantly said: "A vile friar more or less matters little; let this one also die."[1]

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[1] *Vide* the third trial, in Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxvi.

[2] As we have said, Savonarola underwent examination on the 20th, 21st, and 22nd, and twice on the last day: *i.e.*, at the 13th and again at the 24th hour. The first interrogatory is not signed either by Savonarola, the witnesses, or the notary. But in the second, after Savonarola's first reply, we find this statement: "After these words, Frà Girolamo subscribed to all he had said yesterday and that had been noted down by the secretary of Messer Francesco Romolino, signing himself thus: 'I. Frà Jeronimo of Ferrara.'" The second interrogatory is then continued and ended without any signature. The first interrogatory of the third day ends with these words: "The prisoner again affixed his signature to the deposition transcribed by Messer Francesco, and containing all the things written above." Nevertheless it was left unsigned. The final interrogatory breaks off suddenly. The minutes were circulated in this form.

[3] We found in Milan the copy sent to Duke Ludovico.

During these days a very select Pratica had been likewise held, for the discussion of the sentence. One member only, named Agnolo Niccolini, raised his voice in Savonarola's defence, saying that he thought it a very grave crime to put to death a man of such excellent qualities, whose like was scarcely to be found once in a hundred years. "This man," he added, "would not only succeed in restoring faith to the world, if all were extinct, but in diffusing the learning with which he is so richly endowed. Hence, I would advise ye to keep him in prison if ye choose; but preserve his life and grant him the use of writing materials, so that the world may not lose the fruits of his learning." But Niccolini's words were very ill received by the assembly, and his proposal was immediately negatived, "because no one could count on future Signories, as they were changed every two months. The Friar would most certainly be restored to liberty, and again cause disturbance in the city. A dead enemy fights no more"[2] It was in this fashion that the man, whose innocence had been only more clearly proved by prolonged examination and torture, and his two equally guiltless companions were condemned to death! Even the examiners themselves had been compelled to testify to the innocence of Frà Domenico; and Frà Silvestro, who had denied his master, could be found guilty of no crime punishable by the law.

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[1] Burlamacchi, pp. 151-152; "Vita Latina," sheet 60.

[2] Burlamacchi, pp. 151-152; "Vita Latina," sheet 60. No report of this Pratica is to be found in the Archives.

The sentence was read to the prisoners the same evening, so that they might have time to prepare for their last hour. Frà Silvestro appeared to be crushed by it; whereas Frà Domenico received it as a joyful announcement. The approach of certain death roused this noble soul to enthusiasm. He immediately asked to what kind of death they were condemned, and on learning that they were to be first hanged and then burnt, begged and almost implored that he might be burnt alive, so as to endure harder martyrdom for the cross of Christ. He then asked for food, in order to be able to sleep quietly, and face death with greater composure. Shortly before, feeling already assured of his fate, he had written a farewell letter to the brethren of San Domenico of Fiesole, of whom he was Prior, and we cannot refrain from transcribing his words.

"*Fratres dilectissimi et desideratissimi in visceribus Jesu Christi.* It being God's will that we die for Him, pray for us, ye that are left, bearing in mind my injunctions to remain humble, united in charity, and diligently occupied in religious exercises. Pray God for us, particularly during the services of the church when ye are assembled together in the choir. Let my body be buried in some most lowly spot, not within the church, but outside, in some corner near the door. And offer up prayers for me, saying masses *et cætera solita;* and I, being where I hope to be, will do as much for ye. Kiss all the brethren for me, both of your convent and of St. Mark's, and especially our well-beloved brethren at Fiesole, *quorum nomina in corde fixa ante Deum porto.* Have all the pamphlets of Frà Girolamo in our cell collected together, have them bound, and place one copy in the library. And let another copy be kept to read at the second table of the refectory, but let it be fastened thereon by a chain, so that even the lay brothers may sometimes peruse it there."[1] Thus his last thoughts were given to the perpetuation of his master's doctrines! The world can boast few examples of similar faith and constancy.

When the messengers entered Savonarola's prison to communicate the sentence, they found him kneeling in prayer. On hearing the fatal announcement he expressed neither grief nor joy, but continued his devotions with increased fervour. Shortly afterwards, food was offered to him, but he refused it, saying that his soul needed more strengthening than his body, and that he wished to keep his mind clear and well prepared for death. Just then a man came into the cell, dressed in black, and with his face hidden under a cowl. It was Jacopo Niccolini, a *Battuto*[2] of the Company of the Temple, an association formed for the purpose of comforting the last moments of the condemned. When Niccolini asked Savonarola if there were anything he specially desired, the latter besought him to obtain from the Signory the boon of a short interview with his two fellow-sufferers, to whom he craved to say a few words before death. Niccolini showed great willingness to undertake this pious office, and sought the Signory without delay. Then came one of the black brethren of St. Benedict to receive the prisoner's confession, and Savonarola, meekly kneeling before him, fulfilled all the duties of religion with much fervour. It was the same with the two other friars.[3]

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[1] This letter is given in Burlamacchi, p. 155, and is translated in the "Vita Latina," sheet 61^t. Another Italian copy of it is to be found at the close of the manuscript collection of documents (Riccardi Library, No. 2,053) forming a species of appendix to the "Vita Latina." Save at one or two points where the Riccardi Codex seemed to give the best reading, we have adhered to Burlamacchi's version as the most correct on the whole.

[2] The *Battuti* were so-called because they were accustomed to scourge themselves in penance for their sins.

[3] Burlamacchi, p. 155.

Meanwhile the Signory were engaged in discussing the request of which Niccolini was the bearer: for they were still in dread of some extraordinary and unexpected action on the part of Savonarola. But the kindly messenger succeeded in convincing them that there was nothing to be feared from a fettered man, with one foot, as it were, already in the grave; and that it was always the custom to gratify the last wishes of the condemned. Accordingly the prisoners were granted an interview of one hour in the hall of the Greater Council.

It would be very difficult to describe the emotions of the three friars on finding themselves once more together. It was their first meeting after more than forty days of imprisonment and torture; after each one of them had been given to understand that the others had made full retractation, and after both Frà Domenico and Frà Silvestro had been shown the false depositions attributed to Savonarola. But no explanation was possible at this moment; they had only to prepare to meet death with brotherly courage. The mere presence of Savonarola was enough to instantly restore his ascendancy over his companions. At first sight of that severe and tranquil countenance every doubt vanished from his disciples' minds, and their old faith in him was renewed. There was not a moment to be lost, and accordingly he promptly addressed Frà Domenico and said: "I know that you ask to be cast alive into the fire; but it is not well, since it is not meet for us to choose what death we would die. How can we know whether we shall find strength to bear that to which we are condemned? This dependeth not on ourselves, but on the grace that shall be granted us of the Lord." Then turning to Frà Silvestro with greater severity, he said to him: "Regarding you, I know that you would fain protest your innocence in sight of the people. I command you to abandon this idea, and rather to follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, who refrained from declaring His innocence, even on the cross." The two friars made no reply, but after kneeling before their superior, and devoutly receiving his blessing, were led back to their respective prisons. Savonarola had rightly judged that all external demonstrations of feeling, by word or deed, would have rendered their death less impressive and less Christian; that at so supreme a moment all thoughts and feelings should be fixed upon God—and therefore preferred to let the meeting end thus. Now that his disciples showed the greatest readiness to obey him, he had only to prepare to face death firmly and well.[1]

The night was already far spent when he returned to his cell; and he was so overcome by drowsiness and fatigue that, having leant his head on Niccolini's lap for a moment in token of gratitude and affection, he at once fell into a light slumber, and so great was the serenity of his mind that his placid countenance wore a smile as if beholding pleasant visions in his sleep. But he soon awoke, seemed surprised with himself, and as a farther mark of gratitude to his benevolent companion, spoke to him prophetically of the future calamities of Florence. It is said that he also added these words: "Bear well in mind that these things will come to pass when there shall be a Pope named Clement." This prophecy, which he is supposed to have previously delivered on other occasions, was noted down and preserved until 1529, when it seemed to be exactly verified by the siege of Florence. Then the Piagnoni brought it forth and went about showing it to the wondering people. So, at least, runs the tale as it has been transmitted to us by the elder biographers.[2]

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[1] Burlamacchi, pp. 156-157; "Vita Latina," sheet 60; Violi, Frà Benedetto, &c.

[2] Burlamacchi, pp. 157 and 193, Benivieni, and many other writers, in enumerating the prophecies of Savonarola, dwell minutely on this, alleging that it was shown to the perpetual Gonfalonier, Soderini, before

The three friars passed the rest of the night in continual devotion, and again met in the morning to receive the sacrament. Savonarola had been granted permission to officiate, and on raising the Host pronounced the following prayer as a final exposition of his creed :—" O Lord, I acknowledge Thee to be the perfect, invisible Trinity, the Three in One, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; I acknowledge Thee to be the Eternal Word, and that Thou didst descend into Mary's womb, and didst mount the Cross to shed Thy blood for our sins. I pray Thee that by Thy blood I may gain remission of my sins, and implore Thee to forgive them ; and likewise to grant Thy pardon for every offence or hurt brought on this city ; and for every error I may have unwittingly committed."[1] Having made this full and explicit declaration of faith, he took the communion himself, and administered it to both his companions. Shortly afterwards the guards appeared to lead them to the Piazza.

Three platforms had been erected on the steps of the Ringhiera. That nearest to the Palace door was assigned to the Bishop of Vasona ;[2] the second, on the Bishop's right,

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the siege took place ; and adding many particulars to prove the truth of their tale. On this head the reader may also refer to Padre Marchese, " Documento " xlii., loc. cit., p. 194. It is certain that Savonarola had frequently announced the future calamities of Florence, and in a manner that a great number of persons held to be truly prophetic. But that he should have positively foretold the name of the Pope in whose reign these predictions would be fulfilled, seems scarcely credible. Unless we suppose the name to have been added later by devout believers in the Friar, it can only be regarded as a curious coincidence.

[1] This prayer is given in Burlamacchi, p. 158, and was also printed together with the " Esposizione del Miserere."

[2] Ubaldini, in his Chronicle, styles this Bishop "Frater Benedictus Christophori de Opera, vulgo dictus de Pagagnoctis ex parte matris, episcopus Vasoniensis." And he adds : " Fuit suffraganeus archiepiscopi florentini pluribus annis." He was a Dominican, and was elected Bishop of Vasona (Vaison in France, Department of Vaucluse) in 1482. Rinaldo Orsini was Archbishop of Florence in 1498, but resided almost continually in Rome.

to the Apostolic Commissioners; the third, near the Marzocco, to the Gonfalonier and the Eight. From this point a long, raised scaffold had been built out, a man's height from the ground, and stretching across a quarter of the Piazza in the direction of the Tetto dei Pisani. A stout beam stood upright at the end of this scaffold, with another nailed across it near the top. Thus the gibbet bore the form of a cross, although the upper part had been purposely shortened to lessen the resemblance. Three halters and three chains hung from its arms, the first to hang the friars, the second to keep their corpses suspended over the fire in which they were to be consumed. Heaps of combustibles were piled at the foot of the stake, and the guards of the Signory found great difficulty in keeping back the surging multitude who pressed round the scaffold. The throng scarcely seemed greater than on the day of the ordeal, but it wore a very different aspect.[1] A sad and solemn silence prevailed, and even those who had most longed to see this day were oppressed by a strange sense of fear. Yet amid the general agitation many different passions were stirring the crowd. There were Bigi, Piagnoni, and Arrabbiati; devout men, constant attendants on the Friar's sermons, now stood side by side with the reckless crew who had attempted his life with daggers and stones. Many writers were also present whose chronicles and diaries contain lasting records of that memorable day. What thoughts must have passed through their minds, it is easier for the reader to imagine than for us to describe.

Meanwhile some of the populace had succeeded in forcing their way close to the gibbet, and their blasphe-

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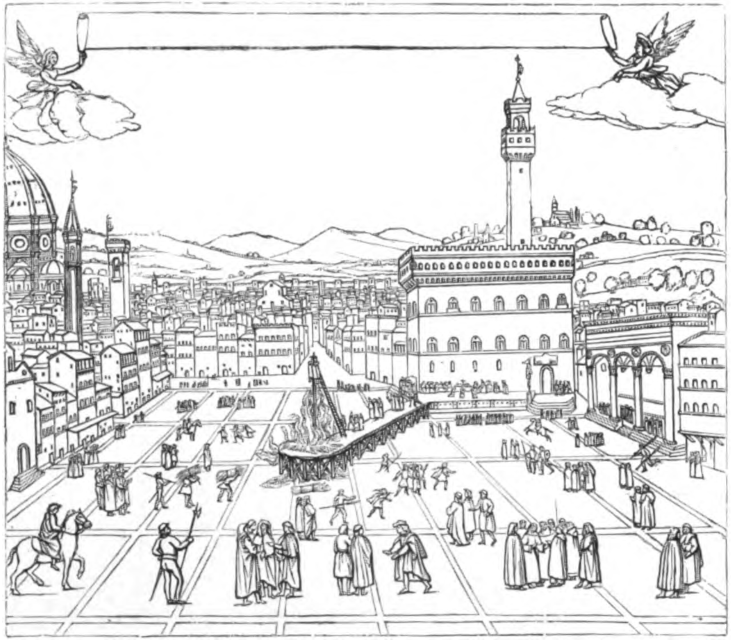
[1] From an old, but not contemporary, picture of the scene, by an unknown painter of little merit, many copies of which are to be found in Florence, it might be supposed that there was very little crowd on the Piazza; but the chroniclers assert, and most probably with truth, that the whole Piazza was thronged. *Vide* Burlamacchi, p. 162.



THE EXECUTION.

mies, indecent cries, and the fierce joy with which they awaited the crowning horror of the scene, made them resemble wild beasts rather than human beings. They consisted, for the most part, of men newly released from exile or prison who had been punished for their crimes by the past Signory and freed by the magistrates now in power simply because of the hatred they professed to Savonarola and his followers.

The three friars were already standing on the palace steps when a Dominican of Santa Maria Novella ordered them to be stripped of their robes, and brought forth covered only by their woollen tunics, barefooted, and with their hands bound. Savonarola was deeply moved by this unexpected demand; nevertheless he courageously despoiled himself of his gown, exclaiming, before giving it up: "Holy gown, how dearly did I long to wear thee! Thou wert granted me by God's grace, and I have ever kept thee unstained. Now I forsake thee not, but am bereft of thee."[1]

On reaching the first platform they found themselves in the presence of the Bishop of Vasona. He had obeyed the Pope's mandate, but now appeared overwhelmed with confusion. He dared not raise his eyes to the serene countenance of the man whom he had once called master, and who now seemed to stand before him rather as a judge than a criminal. Nevertheless the terrible and almost funereal ceremony had now to be performed. The three friars were again clothed in their monkish robes, in order to be stripped of them afresh after being formally degraded. When about to pronounce their degradation, the Bishop took Savonarola by the arm; but no longer able to maintain his composure, and forgetting the usual formula, instead of merely separating him from the Church Militant, he said, in faltering tones: "*Separo te ab Ecclesia militante atque triumphante.*" Thereupon Savonarola calmly set him right, saying: "*Militante, non triumphante: hoc enim tuum non est.*" [1] And these words were uttered in a tone that pierced to the souls of the bystanders, so that all who heard remembered them for ever.

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[1] Burlamacchi, p. 158; and Pico. Frà Benedetto quotes the same words in part iii. of his "Vulnera Diligentis." On all these last events reference may be made to the "Vita Latina;" Frà Benedetto, "Cedrus Libani;" Nardi, i. p. 158 and fol.; Violi, "Giornate."

When thus degraded and unfrocked, the three friars, only covered by their tunics, were delivered over to the secular arm, and led before the Apostolic Commissioners to hear the sentence proclaiming them schismatics and heretics. After this, Romolino with ghastly irony absolved them from all sin, and asked if they accepted his absolution. Whereupon they bowed their heads in token of assent. They were then led before the Eight, who, according to custom, put the sentence to the vote and carried it unanimously. But one of the Eight, Francesco Cini, was absent, having refused to take any part in so iniquitous a proceeding. The sentence [2] was immediately read to the prisoners, and ran as follows: "The Eight, having maturely considered the depositions of the three friars, and the atrocious crimes committed by them, the which are therein laid bare, and having considered the sentence pronounced by the Commissioners of the Pope, who have now handed them over to the secular arm to be punished, hereby decree: that each of the three be hung from the gibbet, and then burnt, so that their souls be entirely parted from their bodies." [3]

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[1] Burlamacchi, p. 159; "Vita Latina," sheet 62; Picus, "Vita," p. 91; "Vulnera Diligentis," part iii.; Nardi, i., 161.

[2] The sentence begins as follows: "Presentes spectabiles domini Octo viri Reipublicæ Florentinæ, in sufficienti numero congregati, servatis servandis, et obtendo partito, absente tamen Francisco Cini eorum collega."

[3] *Vide* the sentence in Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxx.

With firm steps and tranquil hearts the victims then mounted the scaffold. Even Frà Silvestro showed courage at the last, and in the presence of death seemed again a worthy disciple of his master. Savonarola himself appeared endued with superhuman strength, never losing, even for an instant, the calm required to meet his terrible fate in a Christian frame of mind. While he and his companions, all three barely covered by their tunics, with naked feet and arms bound, were being slowly led from the ringhiera to the gibbet, the dregs of the populace were allowed to assail them with vile words and viler acts. Savonarola endured this bitter martyrdom with unshaken serenity. One bystander, stirred with compassion, approached him and said a few comforting words, to which he benignantly replied: "At the last hour, God alone can give mortals comfort." A certain priest, named Nerotto, asked him, "In what spirit dost thou bear this martyrdom?" He said: "The Lord hath suffered so much for me." He then kissed the crucifix, and his voice was heard no more.[1]

Frà Domenico was apparently quite unconscious of the general turmoil around him, and truly—

"*Parea che a danza e non a morte andasse.*"[2]

For he was so excited that he wished to intone the Te Deum in a loud voice, but refrained at the pressing instance of the *Battuti* who walked by his side, and said to them: "Accompany me then, in a whisper," and thus they all recited it together. He afterwards added: "Keep this well in mind: that the prophecies of Frà Girolamo will all be fulfilled, and that we die innocent."[3]

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[1] Burlamacchi, pp. 159–160; Pico; Frà Benedetto.
[2] Leopardi. (To dance, and not to death his steps seemed bound.)
[3] Burlamacchi, Barsanti, &c.

The first ordered to mount the fatal ladder was Frà Silvestro. With the halter about his neck he had just time to cry, before being thrust off: "*In manus tuas, Domine, commendo animam meam.*" Shortly afterwards his corpse was dangling in chains, and the executioner passed to the other arm of the cross to execute Frà Domenico in the same way. This faithful disciple mounted rapidly, with a hopeful and almost joyous countenance, as though he saw the gates of heaven opening before him. After witnessing the death of both his companions, it was Savonarola's turn to fill the vacant place between them. He was so completely wrapped in spiritual contemplation, that he no longer seemed to belong to this earth. Nevertheless, when mounted on the cross he could not refrain from glancing at the multitude below, seemingly all hungering for the moment of his death. How different the days when this same people had hung rapturously on his words in Santa Maria del Fiore! At the foot of the cross he saw rough men with blazing torches already prepared eagerly waiting to fire the pile. Then he quickly bent his neck to the executioner. Not a sound was heard at that moment; there was a terrible silence. All the vast crowd, even the very buildings round the Piazza, seemed impressed by the general horror. Then a voice was heard crying: "O prophet, now is the time for a miracle!" Every incident of that day seemed fated to remain enduringly stamped on the public mind, as if to increase that mysterious sense of terror which the death of the prophet they had betrayed was to leave impressed for all time on the people of Florence.

Thinking to gratify the unbridled mob, the executioner began to play the buffoon with the still quivering form, and in so doing lost his balance and nearly fell. This disgusting spectacle aroused general indignation and horror, and the man was severely reprimanded by the authorities. He then tried to hurry on his work, in the hope that the flames would reach the poor victim before life was quite spent. But the chain slipped from his grasp, and before he could recover it, Savonarola had drawn his last breath. He was forty-five years of age at the time of his decease: at 10 o'clock a.m., on the 23rd of May, 1498.[1]

The pile was already in flames before the executioner could descend the ladder to light it, for a man who had been impatiently waiting with a torch hastened to fire it, exclaiming: "At last I can burn the Friar who would have liked to burn me!"[2] But then a sudden wind arose and blew the flames away from the three corpses for some little time; whereupon many shrank back alarmed, crying aloud: "A miracle, a miracle!" But soon the wind dropped, the flames again rose round the bodies, and the crowd pressed forward once more. Meanwhile the cords binding Savonarola's arms being consumed, the blast of the fire caused his hands to move, so that to the eyes of the faithful, their master seemed to raise his hand on high from the midst of the flames, as though blessing the people who had doomed him to the stake.[3]

The Piagnoni pointed out this vision to one another, and many of them were so strongly moved by it, that without thinking where they were and in what company, they fell sobbing on their knees in adoration before him whom they already secretly worshipped as a saint. Their women wept aloud; their young men shuddered at the miserable state to which the city was reduced. But while there was bitter grief on one side, there was wild exultation on the other. The Arrabbiati congregated about the scaffold, employed a mob of boys to shout and dance and throw stones at the half-consumed victims, so that from time to time fragments of their corpses fell down into the fire. "It rained blood and entrails," says a writer who witnessed the horrible sight, which evoked cries of joy from Savonarola's foes, and redoubled the fruitless sobs and lamentations of his friends.[1]

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[1] "Vita Latina," Burlamacchi, Pico, Barsanti, Frà Benedetto, Landucci, Nardi, and nearly all the Florentine historians of the period.

[2] This incident is related by Nardi, who witnessed its occurrence (i. p. 161.)

[3] Burlamacchi, p. 162.

Many of the more daring Piagnoni, including certain ladies disguised as serving-maids, forced their way through the hostile crowd to the scaffold, and in the general confusion succeeded in gathering some relics of their saints. But they were soon thrust back by the guards, for the Signory, fearing lest these ashes might have the power to work miracles, ordered them to be borne away in carts to the Old Bridge and cast into the Arno. Nevertheless they could not prevent the Piagnoni from devoutly collecting the remains left on the Piazza, or which fell by the way. These relics, carefully cherished and preserved in valuable caskets,[2] were worshipped by all the followers of the Friar, and for many years served to keep alive their faith in him and their devotion to his convent. That celebrated scholar and philosopher, G. F. Pico the younger, believed that he possessed a portion of Savonarola's heart recovered by himself from the Arno; and declared that he had found it endowed with miraculous powers for healing many maladies, exorcising evil spirits, and so forth.[3] Afterwards, numerous medals of the Friar were struck and engravings made of his portrait, and these were much sought after but carefully concealed by the devout, for now that the

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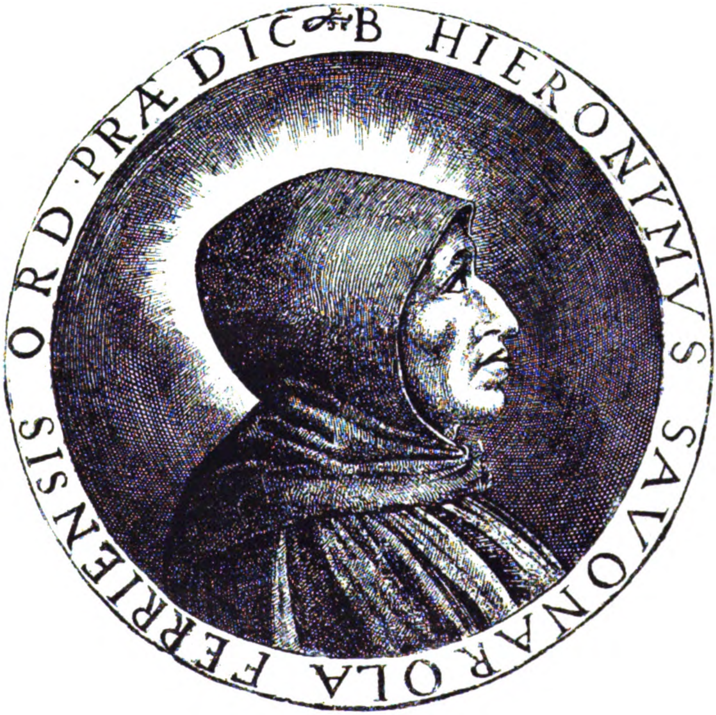
[1] Frà Benedetto, "Cedrus Libani."

[2] These caskets generally resembled thick round snuff-boxes, with the portrait of Savonarola either painted or in low relief on the lid. They were provided with a false bottom under which the ashes were concealed.

[3] Pico, "Vita," &c., chap. xix. All the other biographers also mention these relics.


B HIERONYMUS SAVONAROLA FERRIENSIS ORD. PRÆDIC.

PORTRAIT OF SAVONAROLA.

(From a Medal.)

Arrabbiati were masters in Florence, their insolent fury was not to be lightly braved.[1]

The same day, after the execution, the Ten wrote to Rome and the other Italian Courts, to the effect that "the friars had been put to death in the manner their pestiferous sedition deserved."[2] And the Apostolic Commissioners not only designated Savonarola as a heretic and schismatic, but dared to charge him with the crimes from which even the falsified depositions concocted by themselves had completely exonerated him. "We have discovered," they informed the Pope, "that he caused secrets of the confessional to be revealed to him, and that it was his purpose to excite sedition in Florence by breeding disputes among the citizens. We found this Friar, or, to avoid calling him either a friar or a man, we should rather say, this most iniquitous *omnipede*,[3] to be a mass of the most abominable wickedness. His disciple, Frà Domenico, dared to call God to witness in favour of his master's words and doctrines, declaring that if they were not true he would be content to die on the gibbet, and have his ashes scattered to the wind and rain. Wherefore, in condemning the three to capital punishment we arranged that this prediction should be fulfilled to the letter."[4]

The Signory received letters of approval and congratulation from Rome, Milan, and all the other Courts. France was the only exception; for Charles' successor, King Louis XII., wrote earnestly begging them to suspend the execution, for highly important reasons to be communicated in a following despatch.[1] But at the date of his letter, the 4th of June, the ashes of the three martyrs had long been dispersed in the Arno.

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[1] Nardi, "Storia di Firenze," i. 162 and fol.; Gio. Cambi, ii. 113 and fol. (in the "Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani," tom. xxi.); and *vide* all the other biographers also.

[2] Padre Marchese, doc. xxxix.

[3] Omnipedum nequissimum.

[4] This letter of the 23rd of May, 1498, was published among the Documents given by Meier, who had discovered it at Florence in the library of Count Boutourlin.

The Piagnoni were now subjected to, apparently, endless persecution. The convent of St. Mark's was closed to all outsiders for two months, deprived of the adjoining building of La Sapienza occupied by the novices, and robbed under various pretexts of the library collected by Lorenzo de' Medici, for which it had paid three thousand florins to the Republic;[2] while many other of its old rights and privileges were also taken away.[3] The hostility of the government even assumed the grotesque form of issuing no less than nine decrees against the big bell[4] of St. Mark's known as the Piagnona. As it was this bell that rang the alarm on the day of the riot, it was sentenced to banishment from Florence, brought out in a cart and publicly flogged by the executioner.[5] This business of the bell stirred the whole Dominican Order to more resentment than all the other persecutions combined.[6] Many of the brethren were sent into exile, among others Mariano degli Ughi, Roberto da Gagliano, Frà Girolamo's brother, Maurelio Savonarola, and even Malatesta Sacramoro, whose treachery had not availed to gain pardon for his former friendship with his master. Meanwhile, by another official decree, the musicians of the Signory were sent to pay honour to Romolino by performing under his windows.[1]

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[1] Padre Marchese, "Documenti," doc. xl., loc. cit., p. 192; Desjardins "Négoc. Diplomat.," ii. 13.

[2] *Vide* the before-quoted biographers, and doc. xxxiv. in Appendix to the Italian edition of vol. i of this work. *Vide* also Professor Piccolomini's excellent monograph on the "Libreria Medicea privata."

[3] As, for instance, the right of celebrating mass in the palace of the Signory, a privilege now transferred to the Friars of S. Miniato. St. Mark's was also deprived of the management of the society of the "Buoni Uomini di San Martino."

[4] The "Archivio delle Riformazioni" contains numerous letters and deliberations on this subject. A few of these are included in the Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxxii.

[5] Padre Marchese, "Storia di San Marco," in the "Scritti Varii," p. 272; Gherardi, p. 205 and fol.

[6] *Vide* many documents on this subject in Gherardi's published collection, p. 206 and fol.

Numerous citizens were also persecuted as followers of the Friar, and many publicly reprimanded and declared ineligible for office.[2] Many others were summoned to Rome; but quickly purchased exemption from the trouble of the journey by bribing Romolino, who also received large rewards from the Signory in the shape of handsome pieces of plate.[3] But the citizens could obtain no protection from the continued and lawless insults of the mob; they were deafened on all sides by offensive and indecent songs against the Piagnoni, and their devotions were continually interrupted. But the sorest of their afflictions was to find themselves universally shunned and to witness the baseness of learned men such as Ficino and Verino, who, after being enthusiastic for Savonarola, suddenly made him the object of ferocious attacks.[4] As a greater insult to his memory, the Arrabbiati let a wretched donkey loose in the

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[1] *Vide* in Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxxi., the decrees of the Signory dating from the 27th of May to the 8th of June, and those of the 29th and 30th of June. *Vide* also Padre Marchese, "Storia di San Marco," p. 257 and fol.

[2] Cambi, ii. p. 182.

[3] Nardi, i. 163. By a decree of the 28th of May, 1498, the Signory paid the sum of 111½ broad gold florins for the silver given to Romolino, and a further sum of twenty-five to the reader of the sentence, "contra Fratrem Jeronimum Savonarolam et quosdam alios" (Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," p. 174).

[4] The violent "Apologia" addressed by Ficino to the Cardinals' College, is published in the "Giornale storico degli Archivi Toscani," vol. iii. p. 115; Verino's "Invettiva" is to be found in Gherardi, p. 197, preceded by two earlier writings by the same author in high praise of Savonarola. The "Invettiva" was written while Savonarola was in prison, and is worthy of note as containing a brief summary of the Friar's life, and proving that the only crime attributed to him by Verino, the real reason of the latter's sudden hostility was that of being no true prophet nor capable of performing miracles. Savonarola had dedicated his treatise on poetry to this same Verino, who now designates the master he had so recently revered, as far worse than a hypocrite.

Duomo on Christmas night, and then cudgelled it to death on the threshold.[1] Meanwhile those who remained most true to Savonarola devoted themselves to the secret composition of apologies, biographies, and poems in sanctification of his memory;[2] they studied his sermons, and awaited the fulfilment of his predictions, while strict orders came from Rome to the Convent of St. Mark, prohibiting all mention of him, or so much as the utterance of his name.[3] A few days after the execution some women were found at dawn in the Piazza kneeling in prayer on the stones where the three martyrs had been burnt.[4] And every year, on the night of the 23rd of May, flowers were found strewn on the same spot: the which pious practice was continued for more than two centuries, namely, down to the year 1703.[5]

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[1] Cambi, "Storia di Firenze," vol. ii. p. 135.

[2] Numerous poems were composed both then and at a later time, in honour of Savonarola and even of his two fellow-martyrs. We append one that is preserved in the National Library, was first printed at Pistoia in 1847, and afterwards published by Padre Marchese, "Scritti varii," pp. 259-260. It begins thus:—

La carità e spenta
Amor di Dio non c'è
Tepido ognun diventa;
Non ci e più viva fè.

* * *

Ohimè! chi il Santo e morto!
Ohimè! Signore, Ohimè!
Tu togliesti il Profeta
Il qual tirasti a te.

Translation.—Charity is extinct, love of God no more. All are lukewarm and without living faith. . . . Alas! the Saint is dead! Alas! O Lord! Alas! Thou hast taken our Prophet and drawn him to Thee.

Another of these hymns is given in Appendix to the Italian edition, doc. xxxiv.

[3] Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti," p. 218 and fol.

[4] Landucci, "Diario," p. 178.

[5] *Vide* Gherardi, "Nuovi Ducumenti," pp. 243-244. This pious custom is also mentioned by many of the historians.

CONCLUSION.

AFTER Savonarola's death, so many rapid changes occurred in Florentine affairs, that the Arrabbiati had no time even to plan a restriction of the government; but, on the contrary, were soon forced to see that the Republic could only be saved by adopting the very policy advised by the Friar. For Piero and Giuliano de' Medici were already advancing on the city with a strong force of Venetian troops. Happily the Duke of Milan, in his increasing jealousy of Venice and distrust of the Medici, came forward to avert these perils. But what reliance could be placed in the friendship or good faith of Ludovico? As to Alexander VI., who had held out such lofty hopes, and been so lavish of his promises to Florence, in order to compass Savonarola's death, it was curious to see how completely he gave the rein to his passions, as soon as the wished-for end was attained. It almost appeared as though the death of the unfortunate Friar had removed the last shadow of restraint from the lust and ambition of the Pope and his son Cesare, Duke of Valentinois. He made an alliance with the Turks, and—a thing without precedent at that day—positively favoured the Jews, and put up to sale, in a single year, no less than twelve Cardinals' hats :[1]

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[1] Guicciardini, "Storia d'Italia," Rosini edition, vol. iii. p. 15.

while as to the unnatural crimes, assassinations, and poisonings committed by father and son, their history is too well known for any details to be needed here. The Pope's chief aim was to carve out a State for his son in Romagna; and the Duke was so devoured by the same ambition, that he was already scheming to extend his power over the whole of Italy, and intended to gain possession of Tuscany as a preliminary step.[1] For this reason he was always eager to bring new dangers on the Republic: now rousing Arezzo to revolt, now threatening to re-establish Piero de' Medici in Florence, and continually harassing the frontier and making raids on the territory. Hence the Florentines were driven to pay him 36,000 ducats per year, nominally for his services as a general; but even this did not prevent him from occasionally finding a pretext for returning to pillage their lands. This was how the Borgia fulfilled their promises of rewarding the Republic for ridding them of Savonarola!

Accordingly the Arrabbiati were at last convinced that the only mode of defending Florence against these foes and the Medici was to make alliance with France and honest peace with the Piagnoni, whom they now ceased to persecute. No sooner did they begin to adopt the policy urged by Savonarola, and to which they had been so bitterly opposed, than affairs began to mend and soon went on with far greater tranquillity and success than might have been expected.

But unfortunately Louis XII. was no less ambitious than Charles VIII., and soon plunged Italy in the very calamities which Savonarola had foretold. We all know the history of the wars between Germans, Spanish, Swiss, and French, which ravaged our land for so many years, and made it a prey to pillage, fire, and bloodshed. So long as the French were victorious, the Florentine

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[1] Machiavelli, "Principe," chap. viii.

Republic was able to struggle on in the midst of the general confusion ; but when, on the death of the youthful hero, Gaston de Foix, fortune deserted the arms of France, the death knell of the liberty of Florence had already struck. For in the month of September, 1512, a Spanish army reinstated the Medici without encountering any resistance.

Meanwhile war and disaster were spreading in every part of Europe.

The voice of Martin Luther had already roused schism in the Church ; and a regimen of stakes and gibbets instead of healing the wound, only fortified the new doctrines and kindled religious wars. The Church, Italy, the whole world were under the scourge. And in every new battle-field, pillaged town or fresh heresy, the Piagnoni beheld another confirmation of Savonarola's prophecies. Thus misfortune and oppression only served to strengthen them in their old faith. And when Clement VII. ascended the Papal throne; when the Eternal City was besieged and sacked by the armies of Charles V. ; when the churches became stables for horses and dens of vice ; then it seemed, even to the incredulous, as though all the Friar's predictions were being literally fulfilled. His last prophetic words to Niccolini were brought forth, read and copied with great wondering, and circulated on all sides. Every one was poring over his sermons, and pointing out numerous passages in which the events now taking place had been repeatedly foretold. Suddenly, and as if by a miracle, the Piagnoni were again masters of the city; and the Medici, unaided from without, and encompassed by enemies within the walls, were again put to flight. The Republic was immediately proclaimed, Christ once more elected King of Florence, the citizen militia reorganized, while all the inhabitants were now resolved to maintain their restored freedom, or die a worthy death in its defence. The resuscitated Republic succeeded in resisting many determined attacks, and we all know how its speedy fall was accomplished. But defended by the genius of Michelangiolo, the arm of Ferruccio and the heart of the whole people, its end was no less glorious than the heyday of its former prosperity. Also, during that wonderful defence, the Convent of St. Mark was again the headquarters of patriotism and freedom. The disciples of the Friar, his prophecies, his sermons, and his portraits inspired those valiant and great-souled citizens to fight for their Republic to the last. Thus the history of the true followers of Savonarola ends only with the downfall of Florentine freedom.[1]

As we have seen, the religious creed of the Piagnoni was invariably and strictly Catholic. Even when Rome was besieged by Protestant hosts, and the Florentine Republic warring against the deadly attacks of the Pope, the Piagnoni refused to coalesce with the followers of the Reformation, and indeed the few Protestants existing in Florence, among whom mention should be made of the celebrated Antonio Brucioli,[1] were marks for the popular fury. This was undoubtedly another and most evident sign that Savonarola's doctrines were very different from those of Luther. Nevertheless there was an endless interchange of charges and counter-charges, and amid all this discussion the judgment of Italy remained long in suspense. Immediately after Savonarola's death, Pope Alexander issued the severest prohibition of his writings, commanding all who possessed them to hand them over to the archbishop under pain of excommunication. But, changing his mind later, he sanctioned their republication; and they were tolerated more or less down to the year 1558, when Paul IV. called upon the Congregation of the Index to subject them to minute and diligent inquiry. This led to a long and serious dispute. When the extracts selected by a commission of four Cardinals were read to the Pope, he fell into a great rage, and stamping his feet on the floor, exclaimed: "This is Martin Luther, this doctrine is pestiferous! What are ye doing, most reverend Monsignori?" But, on closer examination, the Pontiff himself was obliged to accept the evidence: accordingly the dialogue "On Prophetic Truth" and fifteen of the sermons were the only works *suspended*; all the rest being allowed to circulate freely.[2]

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[1] The superstitious veneration in which Savonarola was held by the brethren of many Tuscan convents increased instead of diminishing as time went on. They worshipped his garments, addressed prayers to him, cherished his relics, wrote and re-wrote his life, with the frequent addition of new miracles, and celebrated services expressly composed in his honour, in which he was invoked as a martyred saint and prophet. Although these monks were not, strictly speaking, disciples of Savonarola, we will mention some of their writings. Two editions of an "Officio proprio per Frà Girolamo Savonarola" were published at Prato by Count Carlo Capponi, with a preface by Cesare Guasti, in 1861 and 1863. Another "Officio" discovered by Père Bayonne is given in Gherardi's "Nuovi Documenti," pp. 236-241 ("Officium B. B. Hieronymi, Dominici et Sylvestri martyrum," &c.). Both were composed in the latter part of the sixteenth century.

But the followers of the Friar continued to be persecuted even in the sixteenth century. Duke Cosimo I. cherished great hatred against the brethren of St. Mark's chiefly on account of the veneration they still felt for Savonarola and his doctrines. He actually expelled them from the convent in 1545, but was soon forced to allow them to return at the instance of the Pope. *Vide* Gherardi, "Documenti," p. 225 and fol.

The followers of Savonarola therefore continued to profess themselves wholly and constantly Catholic; San Filippo Neri and Santa Caterina de' Ricci adored the Friar as a saint; Benedict XIV. judged him worthy of canonization;[3] and some of his works were even used as reading and text-books for the Catholic schools.[1] And it is impossible for any one to read them without being firmly convinced that, to the day of his death, Savonarola remained unswervingly faithful to the dogmas of his faith; and that instead of seeking to destroy the unity of the Church, it was his constant desire to render it still more complete.[2]

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[1] Varchi, "Storia di Firenze," Arbib edition, vol. i. p. 580.

[2] *Vide* the "Discorso" pronounced on this occasion by Paolino Bernardini of Lucca, and afterwards published in Quétif's "Additiones" to Pico's "Vita di Frà Girolamo Savonarola," vol. ii. p. 559 and fol. *Vide* also a letter by Frà Vincenzo Ercolani of Perugia, published in the Appendix to Aquarone's "Biography of Savonarola," p. xxii. and fol.

[3] "De Servorum Dei beatificatione," vol. viii.

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that he had the spirit of an innovator, and indeed the main purpose of our work has been to insist on this point. Savonarola was the first to raise the standard announcing the uprisal of the truly original thought of the Renaissance at the close of the great epoch of humanistic learning. He was the first man of the fifteenth century to realize that the human race was palpitating with the throes of a new life, and his words were loudly echoed by that portion of the Italian people still left untainted by the prevalent corruption. He accordingly merits the title of the prophet of the new civilization. But to regard him as the leader of a party, a sect, or a system, is an error only to be committed by those unacquainted with the Friar and his times. The Renaissance must not be confounded with modern civilization to which it was only, as it were, the preliminary; for what general character it possessed was as yet vague and undefined. The men of that time justly deserving the title of innovators were those who foresaw the progress of civilization towards a vaster synthesis of the human race, and felt drawn nearer to God. Their hot blood burned like fever in their veins ; their ideas changed with delirious rapidity : they were dominated by a superior force, impelling them across unknown seas to the discovery of unseen but truly imagined lands. Of these men Christopher Columbus was the veritable type and exponent. Rather than downright, genuine thinkers, they are champions of thought. It is useless to ask them what they seek and whither they go. They only know that they are pressing forward, and drawing the world after them in their course—nothing more. Nor should we wonder at their unconsciousness for it is their essential characteristic and merit. They disperse the darkness, and cleave a passage for the new road, rather by force of will and faith, than by force of reason. Theirs is the prophetic mind, the hero's heart, the martyr's fate. The world, in fact, is horror-struck by this new race of Titans springing to the overthrow of old idols, and soon seeks to crush them ; but before long begins to worship their traces and follow in their steps. Thereupon the Renaissance is replaced by modern civilization ; the first synthetical idea disengaged by analysis opens the way to different schools and systems. Savonarola, Telesio Campanella, and Bruno are succeeded by Galileo, Bacon, and Descartes, who come with the might of their genius to fertilize the soil and gather the harvest others have sown. But what could these supreme and tranquil intellects have effected if those other great and generous souls had not daringly rent the veil from the human mind ; had not paved the way by their own martyrdom? Luther himself could scarcely have been so successful in inaugurating his Reform had not the sacrifice of Savonarola given a final proof that it was useless to hope in the purification of Rome, and that no attempt to reform the Church could possibly succeed without destroying her unity, at least for a time.

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[1] His "Trionfo della Croce" was republished by the Propaganda Fide; his "Semplicità della Vita Cristiana" was translated by a Jesuit into French and republished in Paris in 1672; his "Confessionale" was frequently reprinted, with very slight alterations, and used as a Manual for confessors.

[2] Even in our own day an attempt has been made to claim Savonarola as one of the precursors of the Reformation, by placing his name on the monument of Martin Luther, erected at Worms in 1868. A French Dominican, Père M. Rouard, protested against this in a pamphlet in defence of Savonarola's orthodoxy, which was translated and published by Comm. C. Guasti in the "Rivista Universale, Annali Cattolici," vol. vi Genoa and Florence, 1867.

The drama we have seen exemplified in Savonarola's life, spread abroad after his death, and became the drama of all Europe. In fact we behold the same struggle on all sides: as of two worlds met in conflict. One of the two is radiant with the splendours of art and science and wealth; but nothing avails to preserve its vitality, when its poets and scholars, statesmen and potentates are all corrupt to the core. Beside them, however, we see a handful of oppressed and persecuted men, firmly holding together, and forming, as it were, another society by their union: their language is rough, their reasoning faulty, their books uncultured; but the source of their inspiration is inexhaustible, for it springs from the heart, wherein throbs a living force that can never die, that feeds on itself, and derives new youth from danger and persecution. Individual men perish, it is true, but their blood generates thousands of followers; their ideas become the accepted creed of the human race, and are the main promoters of modern civilization. Society is renewed and redeemed by the courage and sacrifice of a few martyrs, it makes progress by dint of virtue and heroism; and we are forced to recognize that whenever the human race has to make some mighty stride on its unerring path, Providence unveils the sanctuary of truth not only to men of elevated mind and piercing intellect, but especially and above all to those of generous spirit and truest purity of heart.

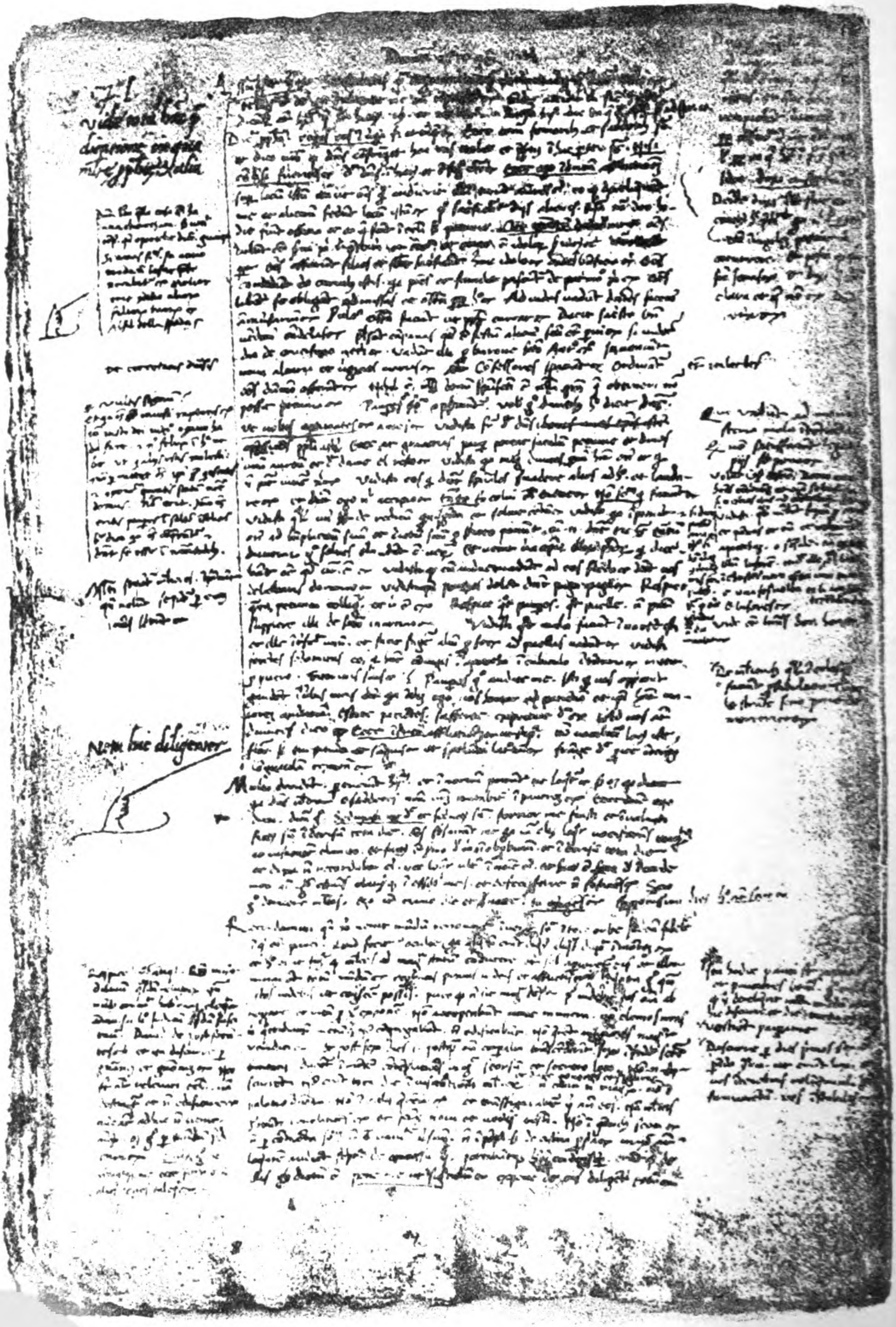
Such was the character of the true Renaissance, and two Italians were the first to initiate it. Columbus discovered the paths of the sea, Savonarola those of the soul; when the one was mounting the pulpit, the other had already set sail, and was cleaving with daring prow the waves of an unknown deep. The latter, while believing to have found a new track to India, had discovered America instead; the former believed that he had found the way to reawaken faith and reconstitute the religious unity of the human race, but his own martyrdom served to prove that his purpose could only be attained after passing through a period of schism and bloodshed. Both believed themselves sent by the Lord to diffuse Christianity on earth; both beheld strange visions which revived their ardour for the task; both touched a new world with their finger-tips, without being in a position to appreciate its immensity: the one was rewarded with chains, the other with death at the stake.

Accordingly, it were idle to inquire whether Savonarola upheld the *servum arbitrium* of Martin Luther or the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination! He embraced a far vaster if much less definite world; and although still shackled by the prejudices and superstitions of the past, looked to a more remote aim. He was the first, in his age, to urge humanity towards the goal that even, at this day, is still unattained, but towards which we are straining with redoubled effort. He endeavoured to conciliate reason with faith, religion with liberty. His work may be ranked with that of the Council of Constance, of Dante Alighieri, of Arnaldo of Brescia; he aspired to the reform of Christianity and Catholicism that has been the constant ideal of the greatest minds of Italy, and of certain leaders of thought in other parts of the civilized world.

When this reform, desired of all, and of which all recognize the need, shall be in course of realization, then Christianity, reanimated by faith, and fortified by reason, will attain to its true and perfect development in the world, and Italy will not be in the rear of the new march of progress. Then perhaps it will be clearly seen that had the Church of the fifteenth century hearkened to

Savonarola's voice, there would have been neither need nor call for a Reformation ; nor religion been opposed to reason and freedom. Then at last the life and character of the man who suffered martyrdom in this glorious cause will be justly appreciated by all.

FINIS.



Facsimile of an autograph of Savonarola.

APPENDIX

INTERPRETATION OF THE FACSIMILE.

An Imperfect Summary of the Sermon delivered on the Second Sunday in Lent, 1491, to which Savonarola alludes as his "*terrificam predicationem.*" [1]

Dominica 2^{a}. in 40^{a}.

Assumpsit Jesus etc. Si sciretis quantum cogitavi antequam determinaverim que dicere volo etc. Testis est Deus, quia dubitavi me cum temptasse etc. (*a*) Tandem accidit mihi sicut Hyeremie. Dicam autem hystoriam que habet Hier., 19 et 20 c.^{o} Dicta hystoria, dic ea que dicit Apostolus, p.^{a} ad Cor., 10.

(*a*) Dixi primo evangelium, declarando ad literam etc. Deinde ostendi qualiter Deus est virtus a quo omnis veritas, et quare homines non recipiebant veritatem, quod propter consuetudinem ut in capitulo Macthei (?) vel propter ea que habes in primo contra gentiles (?) etc. Ideo dixi custodiam etc. Deinde dixi qualiter fui coactus hec predicare, quia nihil aliud per totam noctem invigilem potuit mihi occurrere. Et posui quod fui sicut Ionas etc. Et dixi que habebam clara, et que non, etc. Deinde cetera etc.

[1] The autograph preserved in the Museum of St. Mark. At the beginning of this summary, on the inner margin of the MS., a writer of a later period has added the following words: "F. L. Vide totam hanc predicationem, in qua multe prophetie et alia." The sole reason for publishing these very rough and shapeless notes is that they are the only remains of a memorable sermon delivered during the life of Lorenzo de' Medici. In the original codex they occupy one side of sheet 57 and a few lines of sheet 58. The marginal notes and additions, likewise in Savonarola's hand, are placed at the foot of the page. Those having reference marks in the original are indicated by Latin letters, those without, by Greek letters at the end of the sentence to which they evidently refer.

Dicit propheta : *Reges eos in virga ferrea et tamquam* etc. Ecce coram senioribus et sacerdotibus sum, et dico vobis quod Dominus confringet hoc vas Italie, et presertim in hac parte. Ps. *Nisi conversi fueritis* etc. Dicit Dominus in Hier., et est figura nostri etc., *Ecce ego inducam afflictionem super locum istum, ita ut omnis qui audierit illam, tiniant aures eius, eo quod dereliquerunt me, et alienum fecerunt locum istum* etc. Primo sacrificant diis alienis. (β) Nam non Deo hodie fiunt officia, et ea que fiunt in ecclesia, sed pecunie. Qui episcopatum desyderat etc. Omnes volunt esse servi X^i, idest presbiteri et ecclesiastici, et certe est idolorum servitus etc. Omnes offerunt filios et sacrificant huic idolo etc., dantes beneficia etc. Omnes comedunt de carnibus istis, quia patres et familie pascuntur de patrimonio X^i etc. Omnes libenter se obligant ad missas et officia, propter hoc etc. Ad vidas vadunt dicentes : facemus anniversarium etc. Pulcra officia faciunt, ut populus currat etc. Dicit sacrista : Bene vendemus candelas etc. Pulsant campanas, quando est festum alicuius sancti etiam parvi etc. Si videtur, dic de crucifixo veteri etc. Vadunt illi pro barone sancto Ant.° etc. (γ) Inveniunt nova altaria et virgines marias etc. Confessores spaciant etc. Ordinantur omnes dummodo offerant etc. (δ) Nihil est nullum donum Spiritus Sancti, est nulla gratia que obtineri non possit pecunia etc. Pauperes solum opprimuntur. (ε)

Vobis ergo divitibus hoc dicit Dominus. *Ve vobis optimates* etc. *Aures* etc. Vidisti frater, dicit Dominus, oppressiones populi istius. Ecce autem gravetias : pauper portat saculum pecunie, et dives unum aureum, et dicit : dame el resto etc. Vidisti quia magni divites parvum habent onus, et qui non potest vivere nihil etc. Vidisti, eos qui dicuntur spirituales suadere alios ad hoc, et laudare etc. ; et dicunt : ego nihil accipio etc. ; tanto fa colui che tiene etc. Non

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(β) Dicunt beata quella casa che ha una chierechata. Sed veniet tempus quando aportebit dicere : guai etc. Si amas filios, fa'a mio modo, non lo far prete ; necabitur etc. Melior erit conditio aliorum filiorum tuorum etc. Al fil della spada etc.

(γ) De cerretanis diversis.

(δ) Etiam imberbes.

(ε) Qui vadunt ad monasteria mala intentione etc. Qui non satisfaciunt legatis piis, sub pena etc.

Volunt casus conscientie. Doceo cito habeas contritionem, et omnia solvis ; quia si nescies, ibis ad confessorem. Et si dicis : possum errare ; respondeo : si habes veram contritionem. . . . Respondeo, quod tunc ignorantia non damnabit etc.

solum qui faciunt etc. Vidisti qualiter unus habet de reditu quinquaginta, et solvit centum etc. Vidisti quia imponunt onus ad beneplacitum suum, et dictum suum pro facto ponunt. (ζ) Cum enim dicunt : tu habes tantum divitiarum, ergo solves tantum, dicunt est verum. Et venit vera opinio illorum philosophorum qui dicebant : omne quod vestrum est etc. (η) Vidisti quod cum vidue vadunt ad eos, flendo etc., dicunt : vos debebatis dormire etc. Vidisti quando pauperes dolent, dicunt : paga paga etc. Respice quanta pecunia colligitur, et ubi est etc. Respice quot pauperes, quot puelle ! non possunt supplere illi de Sancto Martino etc. Vidisti quot mala faciunt in nocte isti ; et ille interficit unum et facit fugere alium, pro se etc. Ad puellas vadunt etc. Vidisti fetentes sodomitas eos qui habent coniuges, in apotecha in cubiculo in tenturio etc., mittit pro puero. Fatorinis suis etc. (*a*) Pauperes ergo audite me. Isti qui vos opprimunt gaudent in verbis meis, quia interim ego vos hortor ad patientiam, et ipsi habent maiorem audatiam. Estote patientes, sufferte, expectate, Deum etc. Ad vos autem divites dico : *Ecce inducam afflictionem* etc., ut supra. Non vocabitur locus iste Florentia, sed turpitudo et sanguis etc.,[1] et spelunca latronum etc. Frange Domine, proice in torrentem lagunculam texteam etc. (*b*)

Multi derident, percuciunt Hyeremiam, et in nervum ponunt, ne loquatur etc. Sed oportet quod dicat, quia Dominus vult etc. O sacerdotes, nomen vestrum mutabitur in pavorem etc. Ecce, Domine, ego dixi. Dicam ergo *Seduxisti me Domine, et seductus sum : fortior me fuisti et invaluisti : factus sum in derisum tota die ; omnes subsanant*

(ζ) Vidisti qualiter vendunt saxum pro cera, et pannos et omnia, et reducunt (?) ad apotecham. O sensale, tu excitas illum lusorem. Et dicit ille : Ee bono inchostro ? nero quanto una mora e una sopravolta ; ti li acquista etc. : te renderà tutto. Et lusores etc.

Vide etiam literas Sor. Horet.

(η) Multi sequuntur mulieres ; infamant quando nolunt ; sequuntur per iram ; literas scribunt etc.

(*a*) De mulieribus qualiter in ecclesiis faciunt postribula etc. Tute le strade sono piene de meretrice etc.

(*b*) Vultis signum ? Et quia omnes iniusti raptores etc., ideo, iusto Dei iudicio, ognun ha da fare, et nullus felix in hac urbe : ut qui aliis estis molesti, quomodo permittet Deus ipse quod quiescatis et componere queatis statum vestre domus ? Nemo erit, immo omnes eritis pauperes vel saltem infelices. Hec dico quia omnes conqueruntur, et dicunt se esse in necessitatibus.

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[1] Here another hand has written on the margin : "Nota hic diligenter."

me. Quia iam olim loquor, vociferans iniquitatem, et vastitatem clamito: et factus est sermo Dei mihi in obprobrium et in derisum tota die. Et dixi: non recordabor eius, nec loquar ultra in nomine eius. Et factus est sermo Dei in corde meo quasi ignis extuans claususque in ossibus meis; et defeci, ferre non substinens etc. Scio ergo deridere multos. Ego autem clamo, die et nocte: *Tu exurgens* etc. Sunt novissimi dies, hoc autem scite etc.

Recordamini quando X^s^ venit mundum renovare, invenit solum in toto orbe Iudeam fidelem, in qua etiam pauci. Quid fecit? Oculte (quia alii non erant digni) aliquos duxit in montem etc.: et hoc erat figura quod multos ad magnum statum conducere, et sol aperiretur eis, et illuminarent totum mundum etc.; reprobatis pravis iudeis et afflictis etc. (*c*) (*d*) Nota. ergo quando istos videbis, ut cognoscere possis: puto quod non sit magnum tempus etc. Primo videbis eos omnia abnegare, et vitam pro X° exponere. Non acceptabunt munera, non elemosinas, nisi quottidianum victum. (*e*) Non congregabunt, non edificabunt, non querent amicitias magnorum. Veridici etc. Et post sex dies, idest postquam omnia corporalia trascenderint, fixi in fide Sancte Trinitatis, ducentur in montem contemplationis magne, seorsum et secreto loco. (ʒ) Non enim discurrent. Non erunt tota die in visitationibus mulierum, et dare coronas et figuras non civium non magnorum, non in palatio dominorum. Non in . . . querendo etc. Et transfigurabitur X^s^ ante eos. Nam multas habebunt revelationes etc., et scientiam novi et veteris testamenti. Non in questionibus Scotti etc., non per commenta So^rum^, nec in vanitate versuum, nec in pompa, sed de cisterna propria etc. Maxime autem loquentem

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(*c*) Respice hystorias antiquas. Quando misit diluvium quosdam reliquit etc. Quando mundus erravit, Habraam elegit etc. In libro Iudicum quosdam suscitavit. David de post secantes (?) etc. Et ita discurre per generationem et generationem etc. Nec potest aliter relevari ecclesia nam destruere et non edificare etc. Nunc autem adhuc non venit antichristus. Oportet ergo per mundum predicare etc. Quia ergo vos reliquistis me, ecce formo mihi alios viros tales etc.

(*d*) Ita hodie pauci sunt X̄piani, et pauciores boni. Ergo credes quod Y^s^ dereliquerit mundum etc. Et hic discurre et dic *Tu exurgens* etc.

(*e*) vestient pauperime.

(ʒ) Discurre per dies primos sex, comparando contraria ut erunt lux; et vos in tenebris relinquemini. Ipse firmamentum, vos instabiles etc.

audient Scripturam de excessu Y^s, portabuntque hoc in corde semper, eruntque de illis quibus dictum est *Pone me ut signaculum* etc. Expone de eis diligenter totum etc. Et ecce isti in tali contemplatione vellent stare cum Deo etc. Predicator debet habere has conditiones quod opere impleverit que dicit; quod Deo omnia tribuat; quod oratione populi credat habere sermonem; quod indigniorem populo se existimet; quod necessitate loquatur; quod eos felices putet qui quiescunt etc. Isti erunt tales, sicut et sponsa dicebat: *Ecce tu pulcher es* etc., cui respondit: *Ego flos* etc. Ideo nubes lucida etc. Quia a tanta dulcedine cessabunt etc., et cadent suscipientes preceptum. Et dicet Pater: *Hic est Filius meus dilectus* etc. Et sic non videbunt nisi Y^m, quia omnia alia pro nihilo reputabunt, semper ipsum habentes in memoria et predicantes, et dicentes cum apostolo: *Quoniam Iudei signa petunt* etc. Discipulique moniti, non dixerunt visionem, nisi post resurrectionem, quando scilicet apparebat gloria X^i, et omnia impleta. Ita, quando hoc videbitis, intelligetis que dico. Nunc autem intelligere non potestis etc. Solum oportet nunc orare etc.

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